GMA condition to MILF: Cut terror ties or no talks

Story on PAGE A2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, June 20, 2003 ★★ 72 pages / 8 sections / vol. 18 / no. 192 P15

website: www.inq7.net

THE COUNTDOWN has begun but no hints about her decision to run or not are picked up by avid GMA-watchers from the speech the President delivered on Rizal Day in Calamba, Laguna, on Thursday. ERIK ARAZAS

Smoking now top killer in Third World

SAN FRANCISCO—Cigarettes and tobacco have become a leading cause of illness and death in developing countries, outpacing AIDS and placing an onerous burden on economic systems, the World Bank said Wednesday.

There's some good news though. A new World Bank book, "Tobacco Control Policy: Strategies, Successes and Set-

SMOKING/ A18

Allies say Lacson drug war target

AFP chief spy hit for reviving old charges

By Christine O. Avendaño and Cynthia D. Balana

SUPPORTERS of opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the renewed campaign against illegal drugs was another ploy to shoot down his presidential ambition.

Rufus Rodriguez, spokesperson of Lacson, said there was an apparent attempt to revive the "narco-politics" allegations against the senator.

Rodriguez said this could be gleaned from the statement the other day of military intelligence chief Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus that "a national figure" was one of the government officials being monitored by the government as part of its renewed crackdown on drug syndicates in the country.

Corpus, who did not name the official, was apparently taking a cue from President Macapagal-Arroyo, who said that "drug lords, however high in the corridors of power they may be, must be exposed or hunted down like the common criminals that they are."

Corpus said narcopolitics was a "creeping threat" to the nation, citing syndicates using money to put themselves in power.

In a phone interview, Rodriguez said, "Who else could he (Corpus) mean but Senator Lacson."

Rodriguez noted that it was Corpus who accused the senator of being involved in illegal drug activities during hearings conducted by the Senate two years ago.

"Corpus' attempts to revive the narcopolitics issue is clearly aimed at reviving an old issue against Senator Lacson despite his failure to show a tinge of evidence during the controversial Senate hearings," Ro-

ALLIES/ A18

WAITING GAME

Keep an eye on body language in August

THE "BODY language" of President Macapagal-Arroyo in two months' time will show whether she wants to run in next year's presidential election, an official of the ruling party said yesterday.

Heherson Alvarez, spokesperson of Lakas-CMD, said on television that party leaders had passed a series of resolutions on the selection process for the party's presidential candidate—one of which said that "sometime in August, we will read the body language."

"What would be the body language of the President? Is she going to be favoring somebody from those who have indicated within the party their candidacy, like (Sen. Ramon) Magsaysay, for instance, or like (Sen. Juan) Flavier? Or is she going to run?" he asked.

Alvarez said Lakas should be ready to announce its standard-bearer in October. The election campaign starts in December.

There has been intense speculation on Ms Macapagal's political plans in recent weeks even though she declared last Dec. 30 that she would not seek the presidency on May 10, 2004. She has kept everyone guessing by saying she was happy with her decision at this time.

Senate President Franklin Drilon earlier said he believed the 55-year-old grandmother was reviewing her options, and that her popularity ratings and the state of the economy would guide her in making her de-

KEEP/ A6

Now it's Nani vs Joey in turf war

By Alcuin Papa

DID ex-Press Secretary Hernani "Nani" Braganza escape one turf war only to land in another?

A day after he was sworn in as presidential adviser on political affairs, the man he had been perceived as replacing issued a less-than-welcoming statement.

Secretary Joey Rufino, the presidential liaison officer for political affairs, released a statement that read: "All other political personalities, newcomer or otherwise in Malacañang, are a non-issue to Secretary Rufino."

NOW/ A6

WARNED by President Macapagal and surveilled by the NBI for possible violations of the law, pro-Estrada groups like the Puwersa ng Kababaihan are still at it on Thursday staging a rally in front of the Supreme Court to demand the resignation of the Chief Justice and seven associate justices. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Cool it, Macapagal warns protesting Estrada supporters

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Armand N. Nocum

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday warned supporters of her ousted predecessor against continuing their street protests, saying she would "not allow anarchy to override the pursuit of justice."

"The government shall not tolerate any attempt to bring this case from the purview of the court, where it rightly belongs, to the courtroom of the streets," the President said in a statement.

"I am forsworn to uphold the Constitution, and I must warn those who are destabilizing it that they will face the full force of the law," she added.

Ms Macapagal also said the government would safeguard the

COOL IT/ A18

Ex-rebels are DSWD's new wards

By Volt Contreras

IT ALREADY has enough on its plate putting enough food on the plates of the evacuees of recent wars and typhoons. But it's all in a day's work for the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Aside from caring for war refugees, disaster victims and the poorest of the poor, the country's social workers have been assigned a new set of wards: former Moro rebels and communist insurgents.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development has expanded its role to include helping rebel returnees become successful entrepreneurs.

It all started after officials running the rebel amnesty program noted that only three out of every five livelihood projects undertaken by surrenderees since 1994 have survived. The low survival rate, they found, was attributable to poor management and limited follow-through guidance from

EX-REBELS/ A19

ERIK ARAZAS

IT MAY have been Rizal Day on Thursday but it was not GMA's day. Militant youths tried to disrupt her speech at the plaza of Calamba, Laguna, birthplace of the national hero but were dispersed by police. *Story on Page A18.*

Ileto, 82: He said No to martial law

By TJ Burgonio and PDI Research

RAFAEL Ileto, the general who strongly opposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos' declaration of martial law in 1972, then served as defense secretary under President Corazon Aquino, died yesterday of a lingering illness. He was 82.

Ileto, who suffered cardiac arrest last week, died at around 6:35 a.m. at the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City, with his second wife, Yrna Avelina L. Dulce-Ileto, by his side.

"He was so calm," Ms Dulce-Ileto told reporters at his wake at the Veterans Center in Camp Aguinaldo. "It's the will of the

ILETO/ A18

THE LIVING legacy of Rafael Ileto: the Scout Rangers and principled defiance of dictatorship.

Doubts raised over arrest of 5 young Indonesians

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Was the arrest of five supposed Indonesian terrorists, four of them teenagers, designed to divert attention from the alleged involvement of a top police official in the unhampered operation of *jueteng* and other illegal numbers games in Central Mindanao?

Councilor Eduardo Leyson III said residents here raised this question when the police refused to present to the media the five men. He told reporters that the city council would conduct an inquiry into the matter.

The five were identified as Yustinos Barahama, 16; Jun Pareda, 22, and cousins Allan, Charlito and Mark Panggilawan, 17, 18 and 16 years old, respectively. They were all arrested Tuesday inside an eatery in front of the Bulaong public terminal, contrary to an earlier report that Pareda was collared later in the day.

Police said Wednesday that an improvised bomb and a blasting cap were seized from the five, and that authorities were trying to determine whether

DOUBTS/ A19

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Western Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/06/20/03

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

NEW CONDITION

GMA to MILF: First cut terror ties or no talks

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ruled out the immediate resumption of peace talks with the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, saying they must first cut ties with terrorist and criminal groups before coming to the negotiating table.

"Peace talks will resume only under conditions where the safety and security of our communities against terrorism and crime are permanently assured," the President said in a statement.

"The burden of this assurance lies with the MILF," Ms Macapagal said.

The President said that if the MILF can "convincingly cut clean from terrorists and criminals, the government is ready to engage in principled negotiations with the assurance of third-party facilitators."

The President has ordered punitive military strikes against MILF units accused of sheltering "terrorist cells."

She demanded that the rebels hand over MILF members and officers accused of ordering bombings and raids that left about 100 people dead and hundreds wounded in Mindanao last year.

Just the other day, the President also demanded that MILF chair Salamat Hashim act as the rebels' chief negotiator.

The MILF has rejected a direct role for Salamat in the talks and has denied training foreign militants of the Southeast Asia-based Jemaah Islamiyah terror group that has been blamed for a series of bombings in Indonesia, including the Bali bombing last October.

The MILF has declared a temporary unilateral truce in a bid to restart the talks but the President has rejected the ceasefire as mere posturing.

Earlier yesterday, the MILF said it was monitoring a military buildup around five towns and a city in Mindanao.

The MILF believes the objective of the operation is to capture Salamat's two top deputies, commander Murad Ebrahim and political officer Ghazali Jaafar, an MILF statement said.

"Up to this writing, there have been no skirmishes as both Murad and Jaafar have long anticipated the operation and transferred to other areas," it added.

The Armed Forces acknowledged on Sunday that police and soldiers raided two houses near the town of Sultan Kudarat but failed to capture Jaafar and Ebrahim.

The MILF said military units have deployed around the city of Cotabato as well as the towns of Kabuntalan, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Pigkawayan and Midsayap.

In Davao City, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said that should government efforts to resolve the impasse with the MILF fail, Mindanao might have to turn to God.

"If it can't be solved with government intervention, then we need divine intervention," Reyes told Mindanao religious and business leaders at a caucus for peace here last Friday.

The defense chief said the MILF has not reciprocated the government's repeated offers for a final peace agreement and claimed that the government's offer of a permanent ceasefire was far superior to the rebel's 20-day suspension of military action.

Reyes urged the people of Mindanao to support the government's anti terror drive.

"How can we win this war if you don't consider this your own war?" he said.

He said the government was not making war on the MILF in its punitive actions against terrorist cells "embedded" in the rebel group.

"Rather, we are enforcing the law to bring these terrorists to justice," he said.

The President has ordered the military to go after MILF members blamed for the attack on civilian communities in Maigo, Lanao del Norte; Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte and those behind the series of bombings in other parts of Mindanao, including Davao City.

Reyes said the government did not believe war was the solution to the decades-old Muslim rebellion in Mindanao.

What was needed was "a comprehensive approach that includes political, economic, social and psychological responses to avert further discontent among the marginalized Muslim community," he said. *Gil Cabacungan Jr., with a report from AFP and Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Gov't still wants Salamat in panel

WHILE the government remains hopeful that Moro leader Salamat Hashim would eventually agree to sit as chief rebel peace negotiator, the presence of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front chief in the talks was by no means the government's "last card," said Secretary Edgardo Ermita. And if everything else fails, the government will ask Malaysia to intervene.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said he also did not believe that the MILF's rejection of a role for Salamat in the negotiations was final "until we hear from Salamat."

Ermita said the government has informally informed Malaysia, which has committed to act as broker in the peace talks, about its request for Salamat to sit in the negotiations.

The government said on Wednesday it would not resume the talks unless Salamat sat in as chief negotiator for the rebels to ensure that any agreement would be binding, but this was thumbed down by the MILF's central committee.

"We're not setting too many preconditions. The thing is we wanted to see some degree of sincerity on their part," Ermita told reporters in an interview in a Pasig restaurant yesterday.

He said that if Salamat were to agree to sit in the negotiations, the government could even ask the courts to review the warrant for the rebel chief's arrest. The warrant could be suspended, he said.

Local courts issued warrants for the arrest of Salamat and other top MILF leaders after the police filed charges against them for allegedly masterminding a recent spate of bombings in Mindanao.

In a radio interview, Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye yesterday noted that the MILF's move to pass on to its central committee the decision on whether Salamat should join the negotiations could mean the group has not completely rejected the government's proposal. But it could also indicate that Salamat does not have full control of the group, he said.

In the Senate, opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., expressed his doubts about the government's seriousness in pursuing the peace talks, saying it was making "impossible" demands. The senator reiterated that Salamat was not likely to come out and head the MILF panel when he is being threatened with arrest.

"[The government] should not justify this to call off the talks," Pimentel told reporters. *TJ Burgonio with reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Christine Avendaño*

Tanker blast kills 4 Pinoys

FOUR Filipino seamen died Wednesday during an explosion on the oil tanker Efxinos, a Maltese ship, off the coast of the United Arab Emirates, the Department of Labor said yesterday.

According to sketchy reports, the Efxinos was involved in a ship-to-ship transfer of petroleum with the Singapore-an-registered ship Sebu, when an electrical malfunction occurred in its forward section Wednesday afternoon off the coast of Fujairiah, one of the seven emirate comprising the UAE. The malfunction set off the explosion.

On May 25, an explosion occurred on board the Norwegian-registered ship SS Norway which killed four Filipinos.

Ambassador Amable R. Aguiluz V, special envoy to the Gulf Cooperation Council, identified the Filipino victims as Joney Marcelino, Domingo John, Alme Omac and Joe Mahech.

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No dismissal, just suspension for sexual harassment

By Philip C. Tubeza

A GOVERNMENT official who was dismissed from the service after being found guilty of sexual harassment just might get his old job back.

Former National Labor Relations Commission chair Rogelio Rayala, the Court of Appeals has ruled, should have been meted out a penalty of one year's suspension from office, not dismissal.

Rayala was sacked in May 2000 after investigation by the Office of the President found him guilty of "disgraceful and immoral conduct."

A woman member of his staff had charged Rayala with sexual harassment, saying he put his arm on her shoulder and squeezed it. He also ran his fingers from her shoulder to her neck and then tickled her ear, questioned her about her personal life, offered to fund her law studies, and gave her money, she said.

The victim said the harassment occurred between September and November 1998.

After the last incident on Nov. 9, 1998, the woman went on leave and filed a complaint against Rayala.

In May 2000, former President Joseph Estrada ordered Rayala sacked after investigation by the Office of the President found him guilty of "disgraceful and immoral conduct."

Rayala appealed to the Supreme Court but the case was relegated to the Court of Appeals.

The CA, after initially agreeing with the Office of the President, ruled on Oct. 18, 2002 that the penalty should have been one-year suspension, not dismissal.

It noted that the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act was "very specific about penalties—for the first offense, suspension to six months and one day to one year, and for the second offense, dismissal."

The issue is not finished, however, since Rayala has a pending petition before the Supreme Court, challenging the finding that he had sexually harassed his staff member.

More refund woes for Meralco

THE MANILA Electric Co. should also refund some P4.2 billion to former customers from whom it collected the disallowed income tax recovery of 16.7 centavos per kilowatt-hour, according to a party-list group.

Speaking for the Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives (Apec), Rep. Ernesto Pablo demanded that Meralco reveal how it planned to refund the money.

Based on Meralco data presented to the House of Representatives' committee on energy, Pablo said, "terminated services" accounted for 25.2 billion kWh sold to 1.26 million customers.

"Meralco should explain how it is going to identify customers who have discontinued subscription," Pablo said.

In a telephone interview, Meralco president Jesus Francisco said the company's refund management task force was working to finalize within the week guidelines for refunding terminated services.

Francisco said that of the P2.2 billion earmarked for Phase 1 of the refund—covering customers who used up 100 kWh and below, as reflected in the April 2003 bills—P500 million would go to former subscribers.

"Terminated services cut across all customer classes," Francisco explained. "There are also big customers who have stopped buying electricity from us." *Ronnel W. Domingo*

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MON. - FRI. (8 AM - 7 PM) / SAT. (8 AM - 5 PM)

Dacer slay witness missing, AWOL from PNP

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE OFFICER who had linked former President Joseph Estrada and Sen. Panfilo Lacson in the abduction and murder of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer is reportedly missing.

Supt. Glenn Dumlao has gone AWOL since May 19, the day he last reported at the Headquarters Support Group, Philippine National Police chief Hermogenes Ebdane said in a press conference yesterday.

He was last seen in Isabela, several days after he requested his June salary, according to Ebdane.

Fearing that Dumlao had been kidnapped, Ebdane said he had ordered all police units to locate him.

"We're concerned because he's a special member of the PNP, being (a) supposed participant in the Dacer-Corbito (murder)," he told reporters.

Dumlao, ex-deputy chief for operations of the now defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, is considered key to solving the abduction and murder of Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito.

Lucio Tan sues Piatco, ex-DOTC chief

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

BUSINESSMAN Lucio Tan has filed graft charges against former Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez and other former officials of the transportation department and officers of the Philippine International Air Terminals Co.

Tan is one of the six ethnic Chinese tycoons that formed the Asian Emerging Dragons Corp. (AEDC) at the invitation of President Fidel Ramos to build Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The AEDC lost out in the bidding for the project to the Piatco consortium, however.

The graft complaint, which was filed with the Ombudsman on Tuesday, was based on a Supreme Court ruling last May which voided the Piatco concession agreement.

It asked the Ombudsman to file criminal charges against the former transportation and Piatco officials for being involved in an alleged conspiracy to defraud and deprive the AEDC of the opportunity to develop and implement the project.

Alvarez asked why he was being charged when he was a mere member of the technical working committee during the bidding and his role was only to tabulate the results.

"Why is he (Tan) singling me out? Is it because he could not buy me?"he asked.

Aside from Alvarez, who allegedly chaired the pre-qualification, bids and awards committee, the other respondents were committee members Francisco Atayde, Cesar Valbuena, Herminia Castillo and Wilfredo Trinidad; former Transport Secretary Amado Lagdameo; former Trade Undersecretary Primitivo Cal; Piatco chair Henry Go; and Piatco officers Jefferson Cheng, Cheng Yong, Bernd Struck, Hans Arthur Vogel and Alfonso Liongson.

AEDC counsel Arthur Lim denied that the filing of the case was the first step in Tan's alleged bid to gain control of the Naia project.

He said Tan was not interested in Terminal 3 and that he preferred that the government take over the facility and run it.

"My client only wants vindication and justice for AEDC which originated and conceptualized the project only to be outbid by a completely disqualified competitor, the Piatco group, due to machinations and unlawful actions of the respondents," Lim said in a statement.

In its complaint, the AEDC questioned the DOTC's decision in 1996 to pre-qualify Piatco (then called Paircargo) for the Naia 3 bidding, even though it was not capable of putting up the required P2.7 billion minimum equity for the project; the department's refusal to provide information on Piatco's bid; and its approval of the changes to the concession agreement (such as the government guarantee on the project) which made the contract allegedly grossly disadvantageous to the government.

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DOH OFFICIAL ADVISORY

FRIDAY 20 June 2003

Question.

How can we tell SARS from the other diseases or infections that also cause fever?

Answer.

The doctors are using 3 criteria as a first net to catch those who may have SARS (suspect SARS):

1. travel or residence in a SARS affected country the previous 14 days before the onset of the illness, or
2. having taken cared of, live with or come in contact with bodily secretions of another person with SARS, AND
3. fever or history of fever within 14 days of travel or close contact with a person with SARS.

Those with either 1 or 2 AND 3 are suspected to have SARS. They will have to be closely observed in isolation from the others until the person develops other signs that are more definitely SARS, such as difficulty of breathing as a sign of pneumonia or chest x-ray showing pneumonia.

The other infections also start the same way as SARS, but will also reveal themselves when the sick person develops hemorrhage as in dengue hemorrhagic fever or the typical rashes of measles. There are other bacteria and viruses that can also cause pneumonia, and differentiating SARS from these will involve much hospital laboratory testing and clinical observation of the patient.

For the ordinary person, it is indeed very difficult to tell the difference between SARS and the other infections, and by that time you can tell the difference, SARS would have infected others already. Therefore, any fever should be regarded with caution. Home rest and home isolation until the real disease reveals itself will help a lot in preventing SARS from spreading.

Reported SARS cases in the Country
(March 17 - June 19, 2003)

SARS suspects:	
total cumulative admission	91
total discharged	69
presently admitted (June 11, 2003)	2
SARS cases	12
SARS deaths	2
SARS Recovered/Cured	10

Health Workers, Protect Yourselves!

The DOH is advising all health workers, specially hospital workers caring for SARS suspect patients, to protect themselves from SARS by wearing Personal Protective Equipment (such as mask, gloves, caps, goggles, etc.) at all times in dealing with suspect cases.

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Terminal 3 won't open by October

CONTRARY to earlier pronouncements by Malacañang, the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Passenger Terminal 3 will not be operational this year, certainly not by October, when US President George W. Bush arrives for a state visit.

Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) officials told the Senate public services committee chaired by Sen. Joker Arroyo as much at a hearing yesterday.

"Without an access road (and a) communication system, we can't operate Naia 3," said engineer Elpidio Mendoza, assistant project director for Terminal 3.

He debunked reports the Miaa could have the facility up and running in time for Bush's visit in October.

Mendoza told Arroyo and committee members Ralph Recto and Juan Flavier construction of the surface access road was imperative. The 2.7-kilometer, four-lane road would cross Naia runway 13/31 to connect Terminals 2 and 3.

Asked to explain the surface road, Miaa General Manager Edgardo Manda said: "In three to four months, we can construct the internal access road."

Manda then qualified that by adding that this could be done provided the controversy surrounding Piatco was settled by then.

Arroyo told Manda the issue became moot after both the Supreme Court and the Senate had declared that all five Piatco contracts with the government were null and void *ab initio* (from the beginning).

Arroyo said what was also bothersome was that the Department of Transportation and Communications and Piatco were currently in negotiations to settle the issue amicably.

Later, in a statement, Naia General Manager Guillermo Cunanan took issue with Arroyo for saying the government and Piatco were involved in negotiations.

"The good senator must be hallucinating as there are currently no negotiations between the government and Piatco. So what is there to stop," said Cunanan.

He said that despite the Supreme Court's recommendation that both parties consider going through arbitration, the negotiations did not take off.

Cunanan said Arroyo may have been referring to the "cloak-and-dagger negotiations" for a "payoff" from Piatco's German partner, Fraport AG.

"At first, Sen. Arroyo played prima donna by refusing to investigate the attempt by Malacañang-allied lawyers to extort $70 million from Fraport," Cunanan said.

"Now he wants government to stop it. In effect, he recognizes the mulcting attempt," he added.

Michael Lim Ubac

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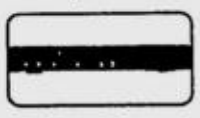

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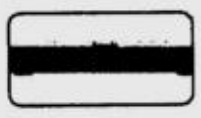

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, June 20, 2003
11th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 2 Cor 11:18, 21-30

Gospel: Mt 6:19-23

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not store up treasure for yourself here on earth where moth and rust destroy it, and where thieves can steal it. Store up treasure for yourself with God, where no moth or rust can destroy nor thief come and steal it.

"For where your treasure is, there also your heart will be.

"The lamp of the body is the eye; if your eyes are sound, your whole body will be in the light. If your eyes are diseased your whole body will be in darkness. Then, if your light has become darkness, how dark will be the darkest part of you!"

Commentary

The way to heaven is not to nullify the value of the things that are on earth. The Creator himself declared everything he had made to be good. What Jesus teaches us is to value things for what they are really worth. Each thing is as valuable as the human need it satisfies is important. But not all our needs are equally important. Our greatest need is to be loved unconditionally and only God can offer us that. Possessions, relationships, and all we work for should dispose us for that love. We must renounce anything that gets in the way of that love. To value God above all, serving him with all we have and are, depriving ourselves of all that do not befit his service, is to store up treasures in heaven.

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In Asia, RP spends least on education–UNDP

By Carlito Pablo

IN THE entire Asian region, the Philippines spends the least on education, despite having a former educator as president, according to House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla, quoting figures from the United Nations Development Program.

Padilla (LDP, Nueva Vizcaya) said the Philippines spent $138 on basic education per pupil per year while Japan, for instance, spent $3,872; Singapore, $1,582; and Thailand, $852.

"This is a regional tragedy," the solon said in a statement, which did not give the complete UNDP listing.

"President Macapagal should have been an education president," Padilla said, "one who should have pushed long and hard for an education agenda."

Instead of "lifting education from its sorry state of under-investment and neglect," he lamented, the President may have "squandered what could have been the golden years for the education sector."

In the same statement, Padilla included the following statistics to illustrate the state of education in the country: classroom shortage, 44,716; teacher shortage, 35,818; and desk shortage, four million.

Out of 100 first graders, only 60 would finish grade school, he said.

He concluded: "The state of education is probably worse than when Ms. Macapagal assumed power in 2001."

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Senate wants Laoag Air franchise revoked

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE SENATE committee on public services is set to recommend the revocation of the 25-year congressional franchise of Laoag International Airlines (LIA) as a result of the Nov. 11 2002 crash of one of its planes at Manila Bay that killed 19 persons.

Sen. Joker Arroyo made the announcement yesterday as his committee wrapped up public hearings on the crash of LIA Flight 585.

Arroyo said his committee would adopt the findings and recommendations of a special committee under the Department of Transportation and Communication on the cause of the crash of the F-27 aircraft.

Transportation Secretary Leonardo Mendoza disclosed in January that Flight 585 crashed shortly after take-off because the pilots failed to notice that the fuel shutoff switches were at the shut position.

Mendoza said the plane crashed due to engine failure resulting from fuel starvation.

Arroyo said he would file a resolution seeking the revocation of the congressional franchise granted to LIA only last April 2001.

"Laoag Air does not deserve to be given a franchise for them to operate," he told reporters after the committee hearing. "We will revoke the congressional franchise of Laoag Air. That's how we will do it."

But Arroyo said that the Senate resolution would need concurrence from the House of Representatives.

The report of the DOTC investigative body led by DOTC Undersecretary Arturo Valdez blamed the pilots for failing to operate the plane safely.

The pilots did not check that the fuel switches were in the open position before starting the plane's engines, causing the two engines to flame up and prompting the pilots to ditch into Manila Bay.

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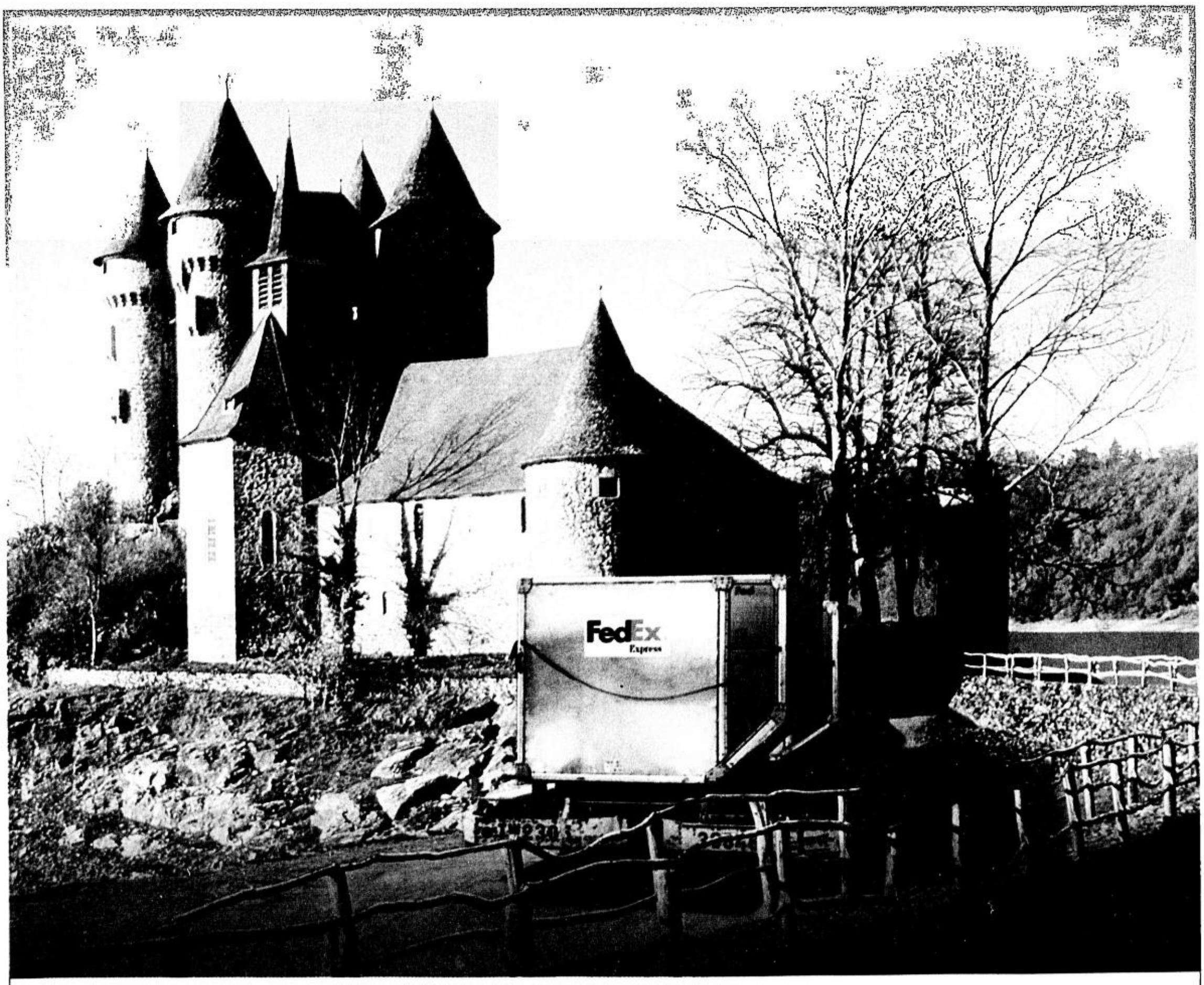

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WHO's who? Joey Rufino is either presidential adviser on political affairs or is it Hernani Braganza? Rufino claims he has always been known from Day 1 of the Macapagal administration as the political liaison coordinating with LGUs nationwide. PDI FILE PHOTO

Now it's Nani vs Joey in turf war

From page A1

Rufino was often referred to as the presidential adviser on political affairs, since he is also executive director of the administration party Lakas, which Ms Macapagal co-chairs.

"As Secretary Rufino has always been doing from day one of the Macapagal administration, he continues as the political liaison in coordinating with local government officials nationwide, especially in terms of operationalizing the political philosophy and developmental agenda of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to ensure that it trickles down to the grassroots and the cross-section of society," the statement said.

Rufino also stressed his party role in the run-up to next year's presidential elections.

"Being at the same time national executive director and vice president for finance of Lakas-CMD, Secretary Rufino is handling the secretariat's day-to-day operations and harnessing all elements necessary for the party buildup. He likewise takes care of all party matters to make it reflective of all members, particularly those occupying elected and appointed positions in government."

Clinical

The almost clinical job description Rufino circulated, an apparent attempt to distinguish his functions from those of Braganza, failed to get a reaction from the new presidential adviser.

Braganza's spokesperson, Press Assistant Secretary Rocky Nazareno, said his group had "no comment" on the matter.

"*Baka lumaki pa* (The issue might get out of hand)," he said.

Braganza's oath-taking the other day came almost two weeks after the INQUIRER, quoting a source on condition of anonymity, reported that Braganza was replacing Rufino.

Before assuming his new post, the former Pangasinan congressman was press secretary, but he went on a two-month leave because of health problems. He was replaced by broadcast veteran Milton Alingod.

Rufino himself had just come off a leave, also for health reasons. He was incredulous when asked for comment by reporters on his replacement, saying he had not heard he was being replaced.

In April, Braganza had offered to resign, citing health problems as his official reason.

However, Malacañang insiders had said the real reason Braganza wanted to quit was his bitter turf war with Presidential Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao.

Braganza and Tiglao even engaged in a shouting match in front of the President.

During her official visit to Tokyo Ms Macapagal told reporters that Braganza, when he returns to work, could have any post he wanted.

Keep an eye on body language in August

From page A1

cision in October.

Ms Macapagal was swept to power in January 2001 by a military-backed popular revolt amid a corruption scandal that toppled then President Joseph Estrada. Alvarez acknowledged that Ms Macapagal's short term has been a "very trying presidency."

But he said she has overcome "challenges to her performance" and "challenges to her legitimacy." "And yet this President has achieved global attention, and global, I think, endorsement."

Like everybody else, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. is awaiting the final word from the President.

Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said Cojuangco's decision whether he would stand in the presidential election would depend on a definitive statement from Ms Macapagal about her intentions next year.

"Based on Danding's thinking, if the President sticks to her decision not to run and since there is no other person whom he can trust for the management of the economy, then he might as well take another crack at the presidency," Nograles said.

Nograles, the ruling party's whip for Mindanao, is one of Lakas leaders seeking to draft Cojuangco.

Nograles acknowledged that Ms Macapagal, despite her repeated pronouncements to the contrary, may still change her mind.

Another Mindanao lawmaker, Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (Lakas, Surigao del Sur), said that "there is no law or sacred code" that should prevent the President from taking back her Dec. 30 statement.

Pichay said that there was a "growing clamor" for her to run. "After all, who among the presidential aspirants have the experience to run this country?"

Nograles was among the lawmakers and political leaders who joined Cojuangco in the United States for, among other things, the celebration of the businessman's 68th birthday on June 10.

COJUANGCO's decision depends on a definitive word from President Macapagal about her electoral intentions. PDI FILE PHOTO

"The wait won't be long anymore," Nograles quoted Cojuangco as telling his supporters.

Nograles said Cojuangco had obtained a clean bill of health from his American doctors, who told the businessman that he "can withstand the rigors of a presidential campaign."

"Danding is upbeat and if we were to read his body language, it's one of a candidate," Nograles said.

Speaker Jose de Venecia, who left for the United States last week, called on Cojuangco and they agreed to preserve the unity of Lakas and the Cojuangco-led Nationalist People's Coalition.

De Venecia's call is seen as yet another manifestation of the businessman's significant role in next year's elections, whether as a candidate or a supporter of Ms Macapagal in case she runs. *Reports from AFP and Carlito Pablo*

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EURO COMPLIANT

MITSUBISHI MOTORS

On the run, Dante Tan using Chinese name

JUSTICE officials said they will ask the foreign affairs department to cancel the passport of fugitive Chinese-Filipino businessman Dante Tan who is now apparently using his ethnic Chinese name Shao-ghi Chen.

Justice Undersecretary Merceditas Gutierrez said the cancellation of Tan's Philippine passport would pave the way for his repatriation.

The government of the country where Tan is hiding would consider him an undocumented alien and that would be the basis for deportation, Gutierrez said.

But if Tan has a passport issued by other countries, there is not much to be done, she said.

"What we can do is ask for assistance in order to bring him back," said Gutierrez who earlier said Tan was also holding Australian and Chinese passports.

She said Tan's possession of multiple passports could lead to his being investigated by the government of the country where he is hiding.

Gutierrez declined to confirm whether the country involved was China beyond saying that the country did not have an extradition treaty with the Philippines.

DANTE TAN: Fugitive in RP, Australia.

But she did point out that there is no extradition agreement between China and the Philippines.

Tan, who is wanted for the biggest insider trading scam in the country's history, fled from Australia after causing a scandal there.

Tan had escaped to Australia from the Philippines but then fled again on June 4 after it was found that he had allegedly made illegal political campaign contributions to the immigration minister who is suspected of intervening to have Tan granted Australian citizenship.

Gutierrez clarified earlier that Tan was not in Singapore after news reports said he was in the island-state.

She said the DOJ would formally ask officials of the country where Tan is hiding to have the businessman repatriated to the Philippines. The DOJ still has to find out what the requirements for repatriation are.

"We could ask for his surrender if the law of that country allows it," she said.

The Philippines has already asked Australia to arrest Tan if he returns there.

Gutierrez said that the ongoing investigation in Australia might also lead to the cancellation of Tan's Australian passport. Tan acquired his Australian citizenship in May 2002.

The Philippines was about to ask Australia to extradite Tan when the businessman escaped last week.

She said the government was not even aware that Tan was in Australia until the scandal broke out.

Gutierrez said the scandal about Tan's alleged illegal political contributions may have alerted the businessman that he was no longer safe in Australia, which has an extradition treaty with the Philippines.

"We will continue the process of going after him. But we don't know because he is really hiding," she said.

Tan was charged before the Pasig City court on Dec. 18, 2000 for the Best World Resources stock manipulation scam. The court later issued three arrest warrants against him.

The scam contributed to the eventual ouster of then President Joseph Estrada with whom Tan was associated. The scam also almost led to the collapse of the Philippine Stock Exchange and severely damaged investor confidence. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Aussie senators probe Tan's visa

SYDNEY—Australia's senate launched an inquiry Thursday after allegations Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock intervened to obtain visas for applicants who donated money to the governing Liberal party.

The opposition-controlled upper house voted to investigate all cases in which Ruddock exercised his ministerial discretion in visa dealings over the past seven years.

"For three weeks now we've been questioning Minister Ruddock about a series of immigration matters in which donations to the Liberal Party and the allocation of visas appear to have gone hand in hand," opposition Labor Party spokesperson Julia Gillard told public radio.

"We are still waiting for answers to those very important matters about the integrity of the immigration system," she said.

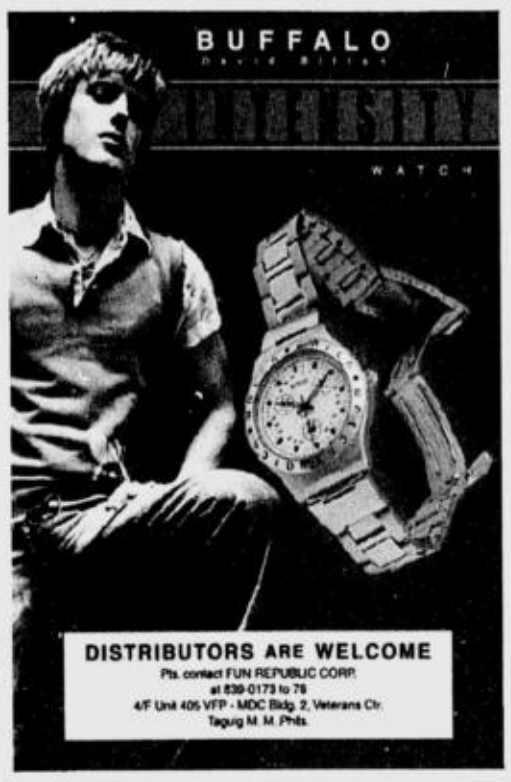
Ruddock has strongly denied granting any favors in return for donations to the conservative party headed by Prime Minister John Howard.

An immigration ministry spokesperson on Thursday described the Senate inquiry as a smear campaign.

Labor and other opposition parties have raised the allegations against Ruddock in parliament, most recently claiming that a fugitive Filipino businessman obtained a residency visa after donating to the Liberals.

Labor has questioned whether Ruddock's intervention to renew Dante Tan's visa in 2001 was linked a $10,000 (US$6,500) donation the fugitive made to the minister's election campaign a month earlier.

Tan fled Australia earlier this month after the issue came to light. *AFP*



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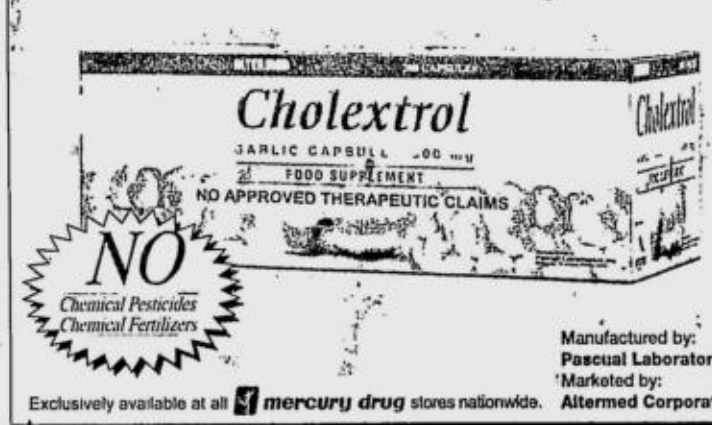

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TOYM HIGHLIGHTS

Deadline for the submission of Nomination Forms is on July 31, 2003 at the JCP Headquarters 14 Don Alejandro Roces Avenue, Quezon City. (Tel. Nos. 373-7907 to 09)
Website: www.toym.org

Question: What do Ninoy Aquino, Lea Salonga, Onyok Velasco, Sen. Loren Legarda, Gary Valenciano, Jessica Soho, Liza Macuja-Elizalde, Manny Pangilinan, Sec. Dong Puno, Alejandro Roces and Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, Lance Gokongwei, Butch Jimenez have in common?

Answer: They were all past winners of the TOYM, the nation's most prestigious and most coveted awards for young Filipino achievers, aged 18 to 40. For more than forty years now, The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Awards, a symbol of good citizenship and social commitment, has given honor and recognition to young individuals who have made a significant impact and difference in the lives of Filipinos and the entire nation. Pioneered by Amb. Howard Q. Dee, then of the Manila Jaycees in 1959, and later, adopted as a national project of the Philippine Jaycees in 1960, the TOYM was initiated to give distinction to outstanding young men for their significant contributions to their fields of endeavor, to their community and to the nation.

As the TOYM celebrates its forty fifth year in 2003, the Awards Search has truly become an institution, having honored no less than three hundred and sixty-eight leaders and achievers, as well as having successfully inspired other young Filipinos to excel in their fields of endeavor. But more than this, it has become an icon, a veritable representation of what is the best in the Filipino and the spirit of "service to humanity." This year's TOYM Search is made possible by the efforts of the Philippine Jaycees, Inc. The TOYM Foundation, Inc., the Gerry Roxas Foundation, the Equitable-PCI Bank, PLDT, Philippine Daily Inquirer, and PHINMA. **Nomination forms can be downloaded from www.toym.org or contact your local Jaycees Chapter or Phil. Jaycees HQ.**

By: Reginald T. Yu, (Manila Jaycees Inc.)

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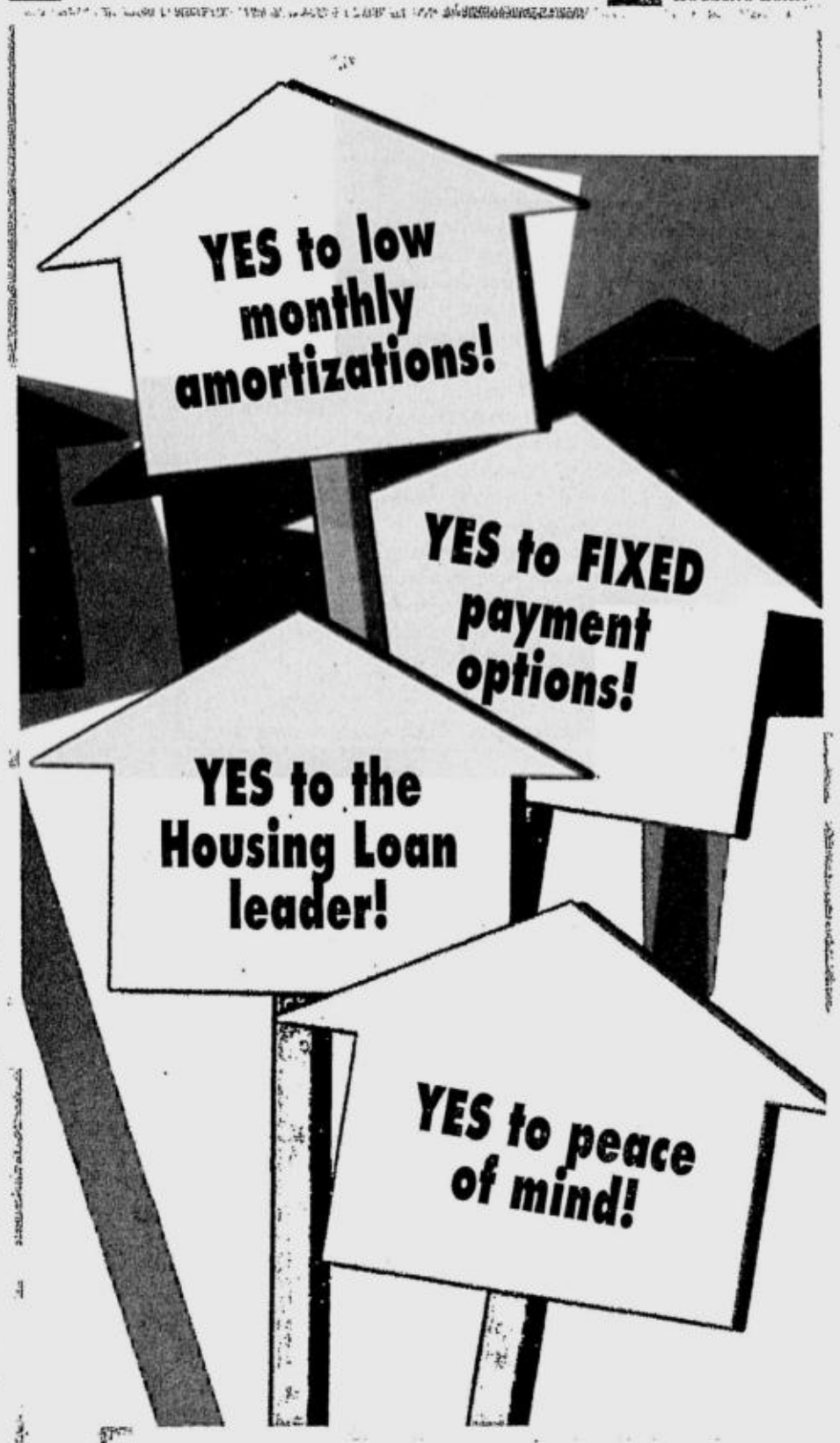

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Vol. 18 No. 192
ISSN 0116-2642

OPINION

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

•100% soy ink•

Publisher ISAGANI YAMBOT
Editor in Chief LETTY JIMENEZ-MAGSANOC
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Extraordinary

EDITORIAL

IT'S just too bad that Joseph Estrada's court-appointed lawyers are handling his defense with the kind of earnestness the deposed president and the many lawyers he has hired have never managed to exhibit. If his new lawyer, Alan Paguia, would have his way, the Filipino people would have glimpsed the end of the circus into which Estrada and his hired defense panel have turned his trial for plunder.

Paguia has filed a motion seeking the dismissal of all charges filed against Estrada, saying he was still president and was therefore immune from suit. He asked the Sandiganbayan Monday to "reverse" the decision of the Supreme Court recognizing the legitimacy of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's assumption of the highest office. "Any lower court cannot reverse the ruling of a higher court," Paguia conceded, as the justices hearing the cases listened in amusement over his convoluted logic. "We are not setting aside that doctrine, but this is a one-in-a-million case... the first time in history where a sitting president" lost his position to a vice president in a successful power grab.

Expounding on his theory later before reporters, Paguia said the decision of the Supreme Court was "binding upon us all," but only "under ordinary circumstances." In this case, he said, the circumstances were "extraordinary" since justices of the Supreme Court were being charged with violating the Constitution. Earlier Paguia had asked the anti-graft court to declare several Supreme Court justices "disqualified" from hearing the case concerning the legitimacy of the Macapagal presidency, which would in effect set aside the Court's earlier decision and recognize Estrada as the president still.

But Paguia had not run out of funny ideas yet. On Tuesday, he came out with an ultimatum. If the Sandiganbayan will not dismiss the plunder case, his client will not present any evidence in his own defense. In that event, he said, a decision on the case could be handed down before the end of the year.

That would have been good news, for a change. People are becoming weary of the long trial and the various maneuvers employed by Estrada and his lawyers to delay the resolution of the case. If Estrada doesn't want to defend himself, nobody can force him to do so. While he claims to have always abided by the law, he has practically refused to submit himself to the judgment of any court of law, saying he doesn't expect to get justice.

Lately he has tried to bring the case before the people, declaring that only through them can he get justice. He seems to have forgotten that it was the people who had judged him at Edsa and decided to strip him of the presidency.

Estrada probably doesn't know it, but he stands a better chance of finding justice in the courts. If he spurns the opportunity to defend himself, he should not complain about its consequences.

But his court-appointed lawyers are not about to let him commit suicide. Prospero Crescini said he and his three fellow de officio counsel would present evidence and fight "tooth and nail" to get Estrada exonerated. They planned to summon 20 witnesses, he said, and intended to win the case in court without resorting to "extra-legal remedies." In the meantime, he added, Paguia should lay his hands off the case.

Now the ball is in Estrada's hands. If he agrees with Paguia that the best defense is no defense, he can tell the court he is dismissing Crescini and company. Then the circus will be over and he will have done the Filipino people the greatest service of his long political career.

Deep distrust

FOREIGN COMMENT

THE US government has decided to send a small team of observers to monitor the truce. But such a team is not enough, either in its capabilities or the credibility of its neutrality. An international team should be considered that would include representatives of the European Union and Russia.

Last year, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan proposed sending a team of UN officials as observers, but Israel objected, claiming the world body is against Israel.

This time, however, the painstaking efforts being put forth in peacemaking must not be left solely in the hands of the parties directly involved. Previous ceasefires have failed time after time because the parties in conflict distrusted each other so deeply. If Israel refuses to comply, the United States must apply pressure.

Asahi Shimbun (Tokyo)

Don't forget the squatting syndicates

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE ADMINISTRATION of President Macapagal-Arroyo is going hammer and tongs against drug syndicates but it has forgotten another criminal syndicate just as dangerous: squatting syndicates. Squatters are everywhere, as widespread and arrogant as drug pushers. They have formed syndicates, complete with lawyers, armed enforcers, fixers and influence peddlers, even chapels. A prominent feature of most squatter colonies is a chapel, no doubt to scare demolition teams with the wrath of God. It is ironic that God is being used by syndicates for their criminal activities.

No land, public or private, is safe, whether urban, rural or forest lands. For there is plenty of money, billions of pesos in these crimes of squatting and land-grabbing, almost as much as the take in drugs, certainly more than the take from kidnapping and bank robberies, but much, much safer. Squatting (like land-grabbing) is a whole new prosperous industry.

The industry was launched by the passage of the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA), better known as "that stupid Lina Law," and by another law decriminalizing squatting. These twin laws gave incentives to squatting instead of penalizing and discouraging it. Those who are penalized are the legitimate property owners. The unkindest cut is that they pay the taxes but these taxes are used to coddle squatters.

There is an unwritten law between the government and the taxpayers. In exchange for the taxes paid to the government, the latter is supposed to protect the property of the taxpayers and to provide them with services. But their tax money is spent to provide services not to the taxpayers but to the squatters, law-breakers who don't pay any taxes. Tax money is spent by politicians to build basketball courts where they shouldn't be, and for roads inside the squatter colonies.

In contrast, when the property owner asks the government, the mayor and the police, to help him eject the squatters, or even just prevent them from taking over the lots that he paid for with hard-earned money, the latter put up all sorts of excuses not to do their duties. Often, barangay officials and councilors, who were touted as the first line of defense against squatting, not only abet but actually encourage and help the squatters. Even mayors, governors and congressmen have become squatter coddlers. Why? Because squatters are also voters.

Politics and the Lina Law have worsened squatting a hundredfold since the administration of the much maligned Ferdinand Marcos, who was on the verge of licking the squatting problem when Cory Aquino took over. Since then, anarchy ruled in the squatter colonies.

Syndicates have become so bold and confident that they are now invading big tracts of land whereas they used to occupy only small vacant lots before. I wrote only a few days ago about the squatter invasion of the University of the Philippines campus along Commonwealth Avenue in Diliman, Quezon City, whose ownership has long been settled by the Supreme Court. They invade even occupied subdivisions, squatting in the vacant lots and parks. They have invaded the park of Sanville Subdivision along Tandang Sora in Quezon City, and other subdivisions.

The latest victim is the Doña Nicasia Subdivision near Batasan in Quezon City. Even now, new squatters continue coming in, protected by the barangay officials.

The 42 lot owners have filed complaints against the squatters and have asked Mayor Feliciano Belmonte and the Philippine National Police under Director General Hermogenes Ebdane to prevent the entry of new squatters and eject those already there.

But although Joselito Cabungcal, officer in charge of the City Engineer's Office has already ordered, after due hearings, the demolition of the shanties last April, City Administrator Paquito N. Ochoa Jr., for some strange reason, has not acted on Cabungcal's recommendation.

It is because of this slowness not only of the courts but also of LGU officials even after the courts have decided cases, that squatters are emboldened. Through bribery and manipulation, they can delay cases. During the delay, they rake in money by subdividing and selling lots or collecting rent from them.

Another mystery: The Lina Law penalizes local and national officials who coddle squatters, but until now no such official has been prosecuted, much less convicted of the crime, although the number of squatter coddlers is legion. The Lina Law also penalizes members of squatting syndicates. Behind every squatter colony is a squatting syndicate whose members are well-known to the squatters themselves. They pay *tong*, rent and protection money to them. But until now no member of a syndicate has been convicted.

Still another mystery: The LGUs, which are supposed to be the spearhead in the fight against squatting, are supervised by the Department of Interior and Local Government. The DILG secretary is Joey Lina, father of the law that bears his name. He therefore knows by heart the provisions of the law, including those against syndicate members and squatter-coddlers among LGU officials under him. Why is he not cracking the whip on his subordinates to implement all the provisions of his pet law? Only the provisions favorable to the squatters are being implemented—and even those that are not there. For example, the payment to squatters in huge amounts based on the area of the lots they occupy. The law does not provide that, but the Department of Public Works and Highways pays the squatters these amounts, which doubles the cost of government projects. Why?

And why is Lina prosecuting the councilors and barangay officials who abet squatting? Why does he not order LGUs and the PNP to arrest and prosecute syndicate members? Is it because he is running again for the Senate next year?

Learning

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE'S a caveat to the story I wrote about the other day, the one about Iluminada Mangalos, the 55-year-old mother of six who has gone back to college and is finishing her degree in elementary education.

What Mangalos has proven, which I dwelled on yesterday, is that it is never too late to go back to school. Neither age nor need may ever be a deterrent to seeking the light of learning. The embarrassing thing is not sitting in a classroom with kids young enough to be your grandchildren, it is standing among a faceless crowd lost in a sea of ignorance. The truly impoverished person is not the one who makes do with rice and salt for meals, it is the one who makes do with waking and sleeping in life.

The caveat to this is that it is never too late to learn, whether in school or outside of it.

Going through school of course has its monumental advantages. Not the least of them is that it reasonably assures work, or at least gives you first crack at it. The number of jobless graduates, which we are constantly reminded of each beginning and end of the school year, must suggest the assurance is not ironclad. The assumption of course, which does not always hold water, is that people who have a diploma, or better still letters after their names, possess the knowledge, if not the wisdom, to perform society's tasks.

That can be of no small importance to those in a state of massive destitution like Mangalos, or indeed like most Filipinos in this country. My sympathies are entirely with those impoverished parents who scrimp and save and give up creature comforts, particularly their own, to be able to send their children—or some of them, anyway—to school. The idea being for them to get jobs someday, and help the family get out of the rut they're in.

I still remember when I was driving an old Passat a mechanic I had in Pagasa. He was a nice quiet fellow, who had a couple of kids whom he sent to school. He always wore old clothes and was always grimy from lifting down engines and handling grease. Yet his kids would be spick and span each time they emerged from the shack they lived in, which was near a creek. When I met him, his boy was already in college and his girl was in high school. I pretty much saw the boy go through college—such was the state of my car!

I remember that my friend was in a rush to finish a job one fine summer day. He said he was working only that morning and was taking the rest of the day off. When I asked him why, he said his boy was graduating that afternoon. He said it quietly, but there was pride in his eyes.

No, I don't particularly mind that impoverished families, which is what most families are in this country, send their children to school with a largely, if not purely, utilitarian end. But for those who **have** gone to school, particularly college, and who have tasted the fruit of learning, I don't see why they should think that should end only with school. Indeed, I don't see why they should think that is possible only in or through school.

My own experience suggests that school merely supplements learning. Of course my own fortune was to have entered college at a time of intellectual ferment. I did so in 1968, one of those epochal years, like 1848, when a renaissance was rocking in the world. That was a year that saw activism sweep the world's campuses, a great deal of it in protest over the Vietnam War. It was of course also the year when Soviet tanks rumbled through Prague, a defining moment for Milan Kundera, who speaks of it in several novels, but that is another story.

It was also my fortune to be blessed, or cursed, by a curiosity that could not be satisfied by the classroom. I loved reading. Though I had some of the best teachers in the world, I can say with reasonable confidence that I learned more outside school, from books, from "teach-ins" notably while sitting on grass under the trees, and from writing for national magazines, than inside it. And I can say with even more reasonable confidence that I have not stopped learning since then, still pretty much outside the classroom.

Some years ago, I heard the saddest thing in the world when someone I know who has built a name for himself in his chosen profession told me that he hadn't been reading much over the years. What made it sad was that he did not regret it. He figured, he said, that he had learned as much as he needed to get ahead in his job, and indeed in life. The rest, he said, he would just improvise as he went along. Anyway, he said, it's true, you can't teach old dogs new tricks.

I've always thought that was a recipe for getting airs and for being caught up in nostalgia. It was a recipe for having an exaggerated view of oneself based on knowing so little, on never being able to behold true talent and real magic. It was a recipe for romanticizing the past, thinking one's time was always so much better than the one that followed. It was a recipe for getting old.

I don't know that I'd ever want to reach that pass. I've always thought age was not a sedative that blunted the desire to discover new things, it was a whetstone that sharpened it. It should be. Not all of us will have the opportunity or privilege to enroll in college at 55, like Mangalos, but all of us will have the fortune and obligation to enroll in the university of life at any age. I do not mean by that the institution Imelda Marcos put up in Pasig near the motels during her time. I always thought there was more life in the motels than in that institution.

You stop learning at any age, in or out of school, you might as well be—well, I can name a few public officials, but someone once told me the learned mind is charitable.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@info.com.ph

Does US pressure on Iran help or hinder?

NEWS ANALYSIS

Paul Hughes

TEHRAN—Pro-democracy protests which US President George W. Bush called the start of a "free Iran" lost some of their momentum on Wednesday leaving some wondering if overt US backing had contributed to dwindling support.

While most expect protests against clerical rule to flare again in the near future, many European diplomats believe US officials should not side so overtly with the demonstrators.

Critics of US policy on Iran say support for the protests, among the largest and most violent seen in the Islamic Republic for four years, served to unite normally factious officials.

"It just undermines and de-legitimizes them (the protesters). It allows officials to blame everything on a big American plot and close ranks against the common threat," said a European diplomat in Tehran.

While US pressure on Iran's alleged nuclear arms program can pay dividends, perceived interference in domestic politics rekindles anger at US involvement in the 1953 overthrow of popular nationalist Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq, the critics say.

"Iranians are nationalistic and although a few say they want the US to liberate them, most don't want foreigners coming to run the country," said a local analyst, who requested anonymity.

Secretary of State Colin Powell was the latest US official to weigh in on Iran, stating on Tuesday that US "policy is to encourage people to demonstrate for their views." Signaling a split with its closest ally and partner in arms in neighboring Iraq, Britain cautioned that outside interference may undermine those demonstrating for change.

"Given the long history of Iran, they have to be allowed to sort out their opposition internally," Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told the BBC in an interview on Tuesday.

"The thing that would most derail the process toward the establishment of a better democracy in Iran would be suggestions that the opposition there was being orchestrated from the outside, which happily so far it has not been," he added.

> 'Iranians are nationalistic and although a few say they want the US to liberate them, most don't want foreigners coming to run the country'

Iran was quick to point the finger at Washington when the protests erupted last week. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dubbed protesters "mercenaries of the enemy." Newspapers published contrite confessions by some of the 250 who have been detained in Tehran saying they had been tricked by foreign elements into attacking the state.

The louder US support for the protesters became, the more Iran's normally squabbling officials pulled together.

Parliament Speaker Mehdi Karroubi, a key figure in Iran's pro-reform movement, which has struggled to make any headway against resistance to change by powerful conservatives, said Iran was united in its rejection of US pressure.

"All the differences and discussions among the children of the (Islamic) revolution are differences of taste but they are all united against the enemy," he said in parliament on Sunday.

On Tuesday, 217 of parliament's 290 MPs signed a statement condemning what they said was the latest in a catalogue of US interference in Iran dating back to the 1953 coup.

US officials reject criticism for backing the protesters, with one saying: "They would have blamed the demonstrations on the US regardless."

He felt Washington had some "moral standing" among Iranians since, in contrast with the European Union, it has refused to deal with President Mohammad Khatami's government, which has steadily declined in popularity due to the lack of progress on reform since he came to power in 1997.

Some Iranians, apparently inspired by the US-led wars to topple the Taliban and Saddam Hussein in Iran's neighbors Afghanistan and Iraq, have said the protests were an invitation to Washington to intervene in Iran.

"I came here to send a message to (US Secretary of State) Colin Powell that we want change," said 46-year-old Parvin at one of the nightly demonstrations in Tehran.

While US backing for pro-democracy protests is disputed, EU diplomats acknowledge their own policy of engagement with Iran's reformist government has borne few results.

"Pressure can also be good. The nuclear issue is a case where we agree entirely with the Americans. Pressure has to be applied to make the Iranians be more transparent about their plans," another European diplomat said. *Reuters*

Cancer musings

HIGH BLOOD

April Rose

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

AS part of my annual physical check-up at the health care clinic, my gynecologist asked me to have a mammography, a pap smear and a trans vaginal ultrasound last March. It was just routine, just like in past years, or so I thought. I had my myomas but the ultrasound would just show that they had shrunk because of menopause, I assured myself.

Some micro calcifications manifested themselves in a clustering position on my left breast according to the mammography results, so my gynecologist requested for a magnified version. When she saw the next set of mammography plates, she requested me to see the surgeon of the health care clinic immediately. The surgeon in turn requested for a breast ultrasound which showed a cystic nodule on the left breast. Then he said I had to undergo a biopsy in the hospital where he is connected, to find out if the cluster of calcifications is benign or malignant. But because I preferred that the biopsy be done at the hospital close to the health care clinic, I asked that I be allowed to go to another surgeon affiliated with the health care clinic. I remember that this second surgeon removed a tiny cyst on my back, one as small as an *atis* seed seven years ago. Thank God, it was benign then. And of course, he remembered, too, but this time, he said the cystic nodule did not disturb him at all. It was the clustering of calcifications which was suspicious. He said the biopsy had to be done the soonest possible time. I was very hopeful that there was really nothing wrong, though. There was no tumor or growth on my breast. There was no pain. There was no discharge coming out of my left nipple. There was nothing wrong with me, I assured myself again.

I requested for a little more time for some good reasons. Firstly, my husband would serve as wedding sponsor to a young colleague in the office where I used to work before I opted for optional retirement. I did not want to miss that wedding, or any wedding of friends and relatives. Secondly, I was about to celebrate my birthday which fell on one of the days before Easter Sunday.

Thirdly, and most importantly though, I wanted to ask for a second opinion. Or even a third for that matter. Lastly, I was really afraid, I think I had to admit this fact although there is no lack of loving assurance from my husband and two children, and even from thoughtful relatives and friends.

The third surgeon who happened to be the doctor of my *kumadre* who had calcifications, too but who decided that she only needed a needle biopsy which did not require hospitalization; however told me that my case was different. He agreed with my surgeon that the biopsy had to be done as soon as possible. The fourth surgeon I met though, said he would not do any biopsy as he could not feel any lump. He said he would just observe me for another month or until such time that any tumor appears.

I did not want to go under the knife. I wanted to back out from the scheduled surgery for the biopsy especially because one surgeon did not agree with the others. Although my husband and the second surgeon agreed on the frozen section which meant that the pathology department would inform the surgeon at the operating room if it is benign or malignant, and the surgeon would proceed to breast conservation as it could be at the earliest stage yet, still I was not fully convinced. The surgeon said he would also remove lymph nodes on my left armpit to find out if the malignancy already reached that area. It would not reach this point, I assured myself.

I had a long talk with my gynecologist, internist and nephrologist (the latter two were monitoring and giving me tests for my Type 2 diabetes and kidneys). Each of them convinced me that it was better for me to undergo the surgery for the biopsy. If it turned out to be benign, I could go home after a day at the hospital. If it was malignant, then it was caught early, and cure would be a sure thing, they said. Still, I was so afraid. But I finally decided I did not really have any choice.

It had been almost a month now. My experience for three and a half days at the hospital is still quite vivid. I had my share of physicians, both specialists and residents—some very thoughtful and caring, some seemed to be in a hurry to finish their few minutes with me. One doctor asked what happened to the biopsy when I already had the lumpectomy. One resident physician was really good-looking and cheerful that he could pass for a matinee idol. One anesthesiologist who promised to be my partner from my first day faithfully visited me every day and made me smile with his happy repartee. (If only all doctors were like him. And if only he could be my son-in-law.) Another thoughtful specialist who was monitoring me for my diabetes was also there every day to make me feel good. And the nurses were very attentive, patient and pleasant. Except for one student nurse who bungled and became so afraid when she saw my swelling and bleeding hand. Perhaps because of the dextrose needle or the hypoallergenic plaster. She disappeared and came back with the nurse only after a few minutes. And because it was a teaching hospital, resident physicians and student nurses would come in bunches to say hello in the morning.

I still feel the pain and heaviness on my left armpit every now and then. I have not asked the question, "Why me?" And yet I must admit I am still afraid. Two weeks after the surgery, I asked my surgeon some questions and he said I kept on thinking or imagining things. Then he sent me to the linear radiation department because he said although he would not recommend chemotherapy and medication for five years, it is a must that I undergo linear radiation.

At the planning session at the cancer institute, I felt I was not a participant. I was just a patient whose head was immobilized and turned toward the wall, and my left arm put above my head, as the doctors wrote lines with a Pentel pen on my body for almost an hour and focused the big machine overhead on me. I had many questions which I was not able to ask because I felt so dizzy and uncomfortable when they said it was already over. It was only later when I read the handout given earlier that I found most of the answers to my questions. They could have given me this handout the day before they scheduled me for planning so I would have understood what they did with my body. Because when they were discussing and doing things on my body, I kept asking myself, is this still my body? Do I still totally own it? And why did they not include me in the planning session? In a few more days, I will have to undergo linear radiation at the cancer institute. And I know I will feel so alone and lonely in that place despite the presence of the oncologist/radiologist, the fellows and the technicians.

I still have unanswered questions. And I am still afraid.

For 20 years, April Rose was an academic supervisor and a high school teacher. Last year, she opted for optional retirement from a respected college for girls.

Love in the time of leprosy

COMMENTARY

Ana Marie Dizon
Institute on Church and Social Issues

I CAN'T help it. It was my second visit to the former lepers' colony on Culion, and the island evokes scenes in my head that keep running over and over. Call it romanticizing, if you will. But everything in that island, which seems to be frozen in time, transports you to a time and place in history that a Filipino leper described as a living hell on earth. Culion, once set aside for the "living dead" in Philippine society, cradled a group of lepers and non-lepers bound together by sacrifice and the will to find redemption.

The men and women who lived in this once inhospitable place, brought together by various reasons and forces, were striking.

For the lepers, it was the strong arm of the colonial government of the United States under Gen. Leonard Wood which forced them to live there. Under this regime, Culion was made into a leper colony to isolate patients from the general population. The island, under the administration of the Philippine Health Service (PHS), became a place to treat lepers, conduct medical researches and find a cure for the disease. It became the de facto international laboratory for the study of leprosy by local and foreign doctors and scientists, and a virtual prison for the patients. I wonder if any of the lepers ever thought of giving up their wretched lives or escaping from the colony? Who wouldn't? Because even the wordings on the discharge papers of cured patients read much like a release paper from prison.

For the doctors, of whom the most prominent were Dr. Lara, Dr. Mercado and Dr. Wade, and nurses, it was the sense of service as men and women of medicine that made them stay in Culion. They had a duty to search for the elusive cure for leprosy, and to find ways to make life bearable for their patients who were condemned to live and die in isolation. How did the doctors find the sensitive balance to treat their patients both as real persons and as living specimens for their scientific experiments? How did they deal with this when they had issues of their own, being young and promising health workers laboring in this forbidding island and serving poor, disfigured lepers from all over the country during the first half of the 20th century? Did their families welcome them back, or were they stigmatized like their patients?

There were also Jesuit priests and Saint Paul de Chartres nuns who ministered to the physical and spiritual needs of the lepers. What were they thinking as they looked after the babies and children born out of secret liaisons between the segregated male and female patients? How did they feel when they ministered to the dying or to the living who had run out of hope? Did they ever run out of hope or love themselves?

The island used to be segregated into areas for the lepto or the lepers and the sano or non-patients. They were separated by a symbolic gate with a bell. The gate had a huge clamshell, which served as a lavatory to disinfect those who came in and out of the lepto area. Inside, the men and the women patients were also segregated into exclusive dormitories, and romantic relations were, as a rule, discouraged. But as babies were born into the lepto area, it is clear that rules were not enough to prevent love and lust among the patients who needed reason to hope for, live for and believe in the future. These babies, initially pitied for their prejudged doomed future, were also separated from the parents and kept in a separate dormitory for children. They were cared for and tutored by the nuns and priests, studied and checked by the doctors to determine if leprosy was hereditary or can be passed on at birth. Despite the separation, children and parents got to know each other and expressed their filial affection during regular Mass visitations. I wonder how these parents and children related to each other, or did they even feel genuine affection? For those who contracted leprosy, did they blame their parents for their fate? How did they imagine life and family?

In many ways, the Culion of the past is a symbol of our country. Leprosy seems to be a fitting symbol of our modern-day scourge—poverty and the unbridgeable gap between the economic outcasts and the rest of society. Both are curable, but then as now, we are still in search of that elusive solution to eradicate poverty. In the meantime, it continues to eat into our collective lives. The culture of poverty—corruption, opportunism, shaming and stigmatization of the poor, segregation—the need for economic exile, separation of families, inequality, etc. still exists. The only difference between us now and Culion then, is the passion and selfless dedication of the people who in Culion triumphed over leprosy and hopelessness. They realized that dedication, genius, passion, generosity of spirit, love, hope and clarity of purpose must serve the ultimate objective of making life on this earth humane for all. And by achieving that feat, they fulfilled the greatest and most meaningful work of their lives. And that is the lesson of Culion that we need to learn today.

Untapped gold mine for historians

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

DINNER with two former classmates (now lawyers) often turns into a lesson in law. Listening to them cite case numbers and Supreme Court dissenting opinions, I rejoice that I became a historian. I would have been absolutely miserable in law school by refusing to crowd my memory with dates, names and cases. Why memorize if you can go to a library and dig up the material? The more important skill is not memorization but knowing where to find the material and knowing how to use it. All those thick, formal volumes on cases reviewed by the Supreme Court remains an untapped gold mine for historians. Since most landmark cases involve prominent people and events, I could write a whole new series of columns on these and how they figure in our life today.

The 1934 textbook on "Legal Medicine" by Sixto de los Angeles contains amusing photographs of reconstructions of a crime. Two men pose, one, as a victim, lies on the floor, the other an assailant holding a gun with a piece of string that shows the trajectory of the fatal bullet. These look Jurassic in the hi-tech world of forensic medicine today, yet medical evidence then resulted in many convictions, sometimes despite a lack of witnesses or testimony of the (dead) victim. In 1918, Bataan Gov. Conrado Lerma was murdered by Jose Baluyot. Lerma was fatally shot while hiding in a closet. Forensic analysis follows:

"The bullet first fired by Baluyot entered in the frontal region of the right shoulder blade of Gov. Lerma and inflicted a wound of minor importance, passing through aforesaid part of the body and penetrating the back of the chair, the ball entered the wall of the office building, where it merely made a circular hole of moderate depth and from which it rebounded, falling on the floor. The line of direction followed by the ball indicates that the accused directed the shot in a somewhat downward direction and that Lerma was in all probability reclining backwards in the chair at the instant the shot struck him.

"The governor immediately arose. His free action was impeded by the table in front, and by the walls of his office behind and on either side, since his table was in a corner of his office. His exit was further obstructed by a small bookstand on his immediate right. His only convenient direction of escape was, therefore, toward his left, through the space between the left corner of his desk and the wall nearby. The governor accordingly took this direction and proceeded toward a passageway a few feet from his desk leading into a corridor. When the governor had cleared the desk so as to leave a free space between himself and his assailant, the distance which separated them was only a few feet. Baluyot turned somewhat to the right and advanced slightly in the direction taken by Lerma.

"The latter, desiring to make good his escape, started to run in the direction aforesaid and Baluyot, raising his revolver again, fired. The ball struck Lerma in the region of the right shoulder blade and passed through the body an inch or two from the wound made by the first shot. The governor at this moment had his right hand raised to his already wounded shoulder and was running in a direction away from his assailant rather than toward him.

"Bonifacio Mencias, the sanitary official, who examined the wounds of Lerma, says that both of the first two wounds were made by bullets which entered from the front. This is obviously true as to the first, but as to the second there seems to be room for doubt. The inspection made by the doctor may have been superficial, and his opinion may have been partly a matter of mere inference from his information as to the general features of the tragedy. At any rate he does not state any particulars upon which he based his contention that the second shot entered from the front.

"After the second shot was fired, Lerma continued his flight along the corridor and, instead of attempting to pass out to the right into the recorder's office, which would have exposed him to the danger of another shot while passing through the open space, he took refuge in a closet at the end of the corridor. Once within, he shut the door and placed himself in a position such as to obstruct the entrance of his pursuer, who vainly attempted to open the door.

"The governor then began to call aloud for help, and Baluyot, calculating the position of the governor's head from the direction of the sound thus emitted, fired his revolver in the direction indicated. The bullet passed through the panel of the door and struck Lerma in the antero-lateral part of the head near and above the right temple. It passed downwards and came out through the left eye, loosening the eyeball in its socket. The wound was necessarily fatal, though not instantly so; and the governor evidently lost consciousness at once. Baluyot, feeling the movement of the body within the closet, opened the door without resistance. As he did so, the body of Lerma shot forward out of the closet, in an attitude seeming to embrace the slayer, who drew backwards, and the body fell prone on the floor. In this position it remained and was found prostate a few minutes later by persons who came upon the scene. Death ensued in about two or three hours, without recovery of consciousness."

Law cases, forensic cases—so many avenues left untapped by historians.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Linking celibacy and sexual harassment

YOUR editorial ("Celibacy," PDI, 6/17/03) is certainly not the first time that the link has been made between sexual abuses in the Church and religious celibacy. The same discussion had also surfaced when the scandal of clergy abuse against children broke out in the United States. We often hear many of its variations such as, for example, when people make the causative link between rape and lust or libido. Many believe that men sexually harass, or rape (which can be a form of sexual harassment), because they need an outlet for their "bursting dam," as your editorial calls it.

But I know of no study that supports this. Nor do I know of any study that supports your conclusion that marriage (or being sexually active) can prevent sexual abuse. Also, your editorial does not cite the source of your claim that "there is a minimum case of sexual harassment involving Protestant pastors" (because they are allowed to marry). To my knowledge, there are no statistics on the incidence of sexual harassment in the Philippines, so how could your editorial have made such a claim? I recall that in the early '90s, a group of women religious from Philippine Protestant churches bewailed the prevalence of sexual abuses within Protestant seminaries and churches—unreported, ignored or dismissed—one reason that they formed an ecumenical religious women's group.

The good thing about your editorial is that it does not engage in victim-blaming (at least not directly or outrightly), instead assigning the blame somewhere. But "dam bursting" and "natural urges" are simply preposterous, even cruel, phrases to use for what causes priests (and other men) to abuse women and children. Where is personal agency and responsibility here? And if indeed it is simply a matter of a "bursting dam," why is masturbation not enough? Or must the dam "burst" into or on a woman or child? Do we have to look for some "superhuman" phenomenon to explain abusive behavior? Where is the accountability of the Catholic Church as an institution in this issue? And I do not mean for imposing celibacy. I mean for perpetuating a culture that causes abuses against women and children.

I do not wish to prejudge Bishop Ted Bacani. But your editorial does not do justice to the issue of sexual harassment within and outside the Catholic Church and to its many victims.

Sadly, based on the way things are happening now, it seems that the final resolution of this case will not amount to much. In all probability it will be resolved quietly within the Catholic Church hierarchy, without resulting in meaningful reforms in the Church and better public understanding of the issue.

My own experience in handling sexual harassment cases has shown that when the victim has no face and no voice to counter the countless victim-blaming voices (and minds), it is simply too easy to efface the issue, the case and the victim.

The odds are so tremendously stacked against this woman because she is not only claiming sexual harassment—by itself a difficult case—but also accusing a respected bishop of the Catholic Church. I wish her all the best. That a sexual harassment case will be judged by men of the cloth in the patriarchal culture of the Catholic Church does not hold much promise. An understatement, of course.

—EVALYN G. URSUA,
University of Michigan Law School, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

LETTERS TO THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Discrepancy in administration of justice for juveniles

I WOULD like to call the attention of Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong as a member of Amnesty International (AI). AI is very concerned about serious defects in the administration of juvenile justice in the Philippines despite existing legal safeguards.

We are concerned that there are a number of worrying omissions in the law that leave children in detention open to torture or ill-treatment. There is a shocking discrepancy between the youth justice system on paper and that exercised in practice.

I ask Datumanong to take the following urgent steps:

- Immediately investigate allegations of torture or ill-treatment of children upon arrest or in detention. Those found responsible must be brought to justice.
- Ensure that child detainees are detained separately from adult detainees, preferably in separate facilities, in accordance with international standard.
- Ensure that parents or social workers are immediately informed of the child's arrest.
- Ensure that child detainees have immediate access to legal counsel and are brought promptly before a judicial authority.
- Strictly enforce the law prohibiting the sentencing of child offenders to death.

I sincerely hope that Secretary Datumanong will inform us of the steps taken.

—LENA BERGHMAN,
29, Bd Victor,
75015 Paris

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

GSIS bank has taken all judicial steps available

THIS refers to NealCruz's column (PDI, 6/16/03) titled "P632,000 burned/stolen inside GSIS bank vault," at the end of which he asked, "What has the GSIS and bank done since then?"

First of all, we wish to clarify that the incident happened on Jan. 9, 2002. Replying now to the query, please be informed that administrative cases were filed by the management against Rosemarie R. Jamir, cashier; and Kathleen N. Vargas, accounting assistant. The respondents were also placed under preventive suspension.

The administrative cases have not yet been finally resolved and are handled by the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel. The criminal aspect is handled by the police which conducted its own investigation.

—MARCOS F. CATALAN,
president,
GSIS Family Bank, 165 Real St., Pamplona, Las Piñas City

Inconvenient but necessary

I READ with interest Belinda Olivares-Cunanan's columns written June 7 and 10 which tackled the traffic and construction works at the North Luzon Expressway. Being a contractor myself with a project which requires me to regularly travel along the NLEX, I have also encountered inconveniences caused by the on-going works. In particular, the section north of the Candaba viaduct from San Simon to San Fernando seems to be the greatly affected portion. But having seen the northbound lanes in the past being flooded by the yearly torrential rains, I can see the purpose for the elevation work being done.

At least in the future, inundation will be avoided and motorists will be able to tell which is the highway and which is the swamp. There is also visible progress toward completion of that area and traffic will be decongested when the new lanes are reopened.

If I remember correctly, a major portion of the NLEX was built in the late '60s. It therefore shows its age and in fact, has been in use way beyond its normal life expectancy. However, it is beyond salvaging through ordinary repair and maintenance works. Subjected to abuse by overloaded vehicles and even flooding, its present reconstruction is the only way to go to provide the much needed infrastructure that will give safe, fast and comfortable travel to its users and contribute to socio-economic growth for the region. With new and improved thoroughfares and widened lanes, interchanges and flyovers in a modernized tollway system, there will be rapid transport of goods and services that will help propel the economy of the central, eastern and northern regions of Luzon.

Southern Luzon has already greatly benefited from the improvements at the South Luzon Expressway, the NLEX can also look forward to similar gains resulting from the accomplishment of the on-going project. Yes, there are inconveniences, but the ongoing project must be viewed as a point of reckoning toward a better future.

—RIZALINO S. SAN JUAN,
rssanjuan@hotmail.com

Telling links of Yunos

THIS is in connection with the arrest of Saifulla Yunos alias Muklis Yunos, the suspect in the series of bombings in Manila and Mindanao that claimed the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians. Yunos together with his Egyptian companion, Dia Algabre, were arrested at the Cagayan de Oro City airport last May 25, 2003.

Yunos was tagged as commander of the MILF's special operations group but he was disowned by Eid Kabalu. Kabalu's denial of the MILF's link with Yunos was to shield the organization from being branded as a terrorist group.

Indeed, Yunos' arrest will open the Pandora's box of the MILF's connection with the al-Qaida and Jemaah Islamiah terrorist groups. The US and Australian governments will not leave any stone unturned to unveil the mystery of the MILF's pivotal role in training al-Qaida and Jemaah Islamiah terrorists. The tragedies that killed an American national and hundreds of Australians during the bombings in Davao City and Bali, Indonesia respectively, have highlighted the MILF's involvement in these carnage. This makes the MILF an accessory to the crimes. Hence, it is not far-fetched that the MILF will be tagged as an international terrorist group.

—NORMA SANTOS,
Purok 7, Barangay San Roque, San Miguel, Bulacan

Will federalism work for the Philippines?

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

OLIGARCHY, patronage politics and federalism. We are delving dangerously into very complex subjects, but allow me to walk through them and show how federalism is now more relevant than ever.

The oligarchy that now controls Philippine politics has its roots in the "hacienda" (estates), which controlled Philippine life for over 500 years. History tells us that the haciendas originated from "encomiendas," (land grants) which were the rewards that the king of Spain gave to his military commanders who participated in the subjugation of the islands. As everyone can see, patronage politics started right here—the king of Spain granting favors to those who had served him.

Since then, what happened was, we merely substituted the king of Spain with a civilian government, which took the place of the dispenser of favors. The Philippine Revolution, the American administration, or the land reform programs barely touched this basic social structural core. Because of its vast wealth and the power it wields, the oligarchy has consistently controlled this government. One very clear example is the way the Lopez family has kept its business empire by having someone handle the political aspect.

Over time, the oligarchy has extended its tentacles from the hacienda to shares of stocks in large corporations. In the Philippine style of doing business, politics is very evident because of the need to dispense favors as the business requires. Special favors are given through government contracts, tax exemptions or reliefs, franchises, import or export privileges, loans from government financial institutions, etc. These form the bigger part of what we commonly call graft and corruption.

Can federalism do something about this? Definitely. The present unitary system of government has made the central government—or what is now called the "Manila government"—the sole dispenser of favors. Federalism will correct that by decentralizing the process of funding and spending to regions or provinces. If this centralization of powers in the Manila government is broken, patronage politics will follow suit. The action will shift to the regions and provinces, but this time, the people of the region or province are much closer to their politics, and their voices will be louder.—**macapili**

* * *

Nice lesson in history, but it still does not address the issue of how the oligarchies and dynasties can be minimized, if not eliminated, from the political scene. You talk about decentralization from the powerbrokers in imperial Manila, but you have not shown exactly who would be able to wrest power nor how this can be done.

But assuming for a moment that this can be done, and, following your own logic, in which you are able to wrest power from imperial Manila, then who would police the different provinces? You might say the people. Fine, but people can be bought and intimidated. Without a central government, who would be strong enough to oppose the local warlords? Who would protect Juan de la Cruz? You can educate the people all you want, but when a gun is pointed at my family, it's very hard to put principles before life. So how does it help Juan de la Cruz, who is now being terrorized by his own provincial government?

Also, how do you address the issue of equal access to resources? Granted that you could coerce imperial Manila to concede power, how do you convince the investors, both local and domestic, to take their business to Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Jolo or Bohol, or some other small province? The business of business is business. The bottom line is profits. So how do you entice them when there are very little prospects of a good bottom line in those areas as compared to the center, which is Manila? And we are not even talking about the absolute monopolies of the Aranetas, Aboitizes, Ayala-Zobels, the Lopezes and the Cojuangcos ad nauseam. And imperial Manila will not concede power without a fight. Fair or foul, she will protect herself. She will form alliances by subtlety, by bribery, by connivance, or if need be, by force.

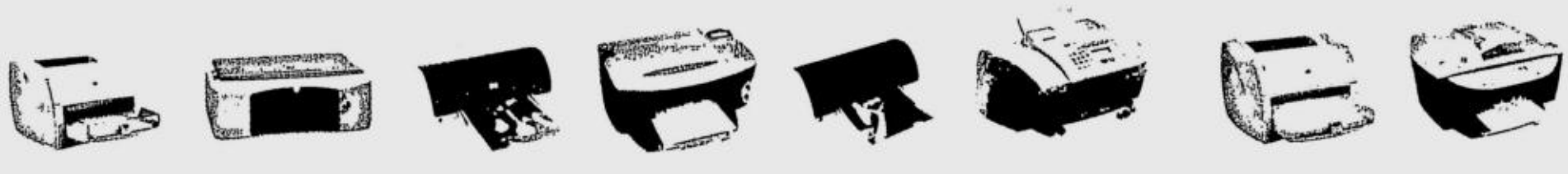
Again I say that this solution, even if made with the best of intentions, will only make matters worse.—**jofis**

* * *

I was not aware that "federalism" was the magic cure-all for all the political and economic ills of any emerging country; that "federalism" would produce good, honest leaders; and that equality in representation to the "central government" would prevail. Gone will be the days of traditional politicians, and new leaders will flourish, bringing new ideas and leading the country into achievable prosperity.

However, there is one catch: you have to wait for decades. It took the United States several decades to make it work, according to some people in this forum. In addition, what's the guarantee that it's going to work? What's the guarantee that the same old-style politicians will not be a part of the new "Federal Government of the Philippines"?

I still believe that a better and and improved educational system is the best remedy. Through better education, we're really investing for the future.—**charly**



Trade in, trade up.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

US forces capture Saddam's secretary

BAGHDAD—US forces in Iraq have captured Saddam Hussein's most trusted secretary Abid Hamid Mahmud, US military officials said Wednesday, in a major boost for their efforts to hunt down the ousted president.

He is the highest ranking member of Saddam's inner circle to be seized so far, amid an extensive and ongoing operation, Desert Scorpion, by US forces intent on crushing remaining resistance from diehard Saddam loyalists.

US Central Command said simply that Mahmud, a distant cousin of Saddam and responsible for his security, was captured Monday "in Iraq," while a military spokesperson added that no further details on the capture were due to be released.

The arrest came amid a series of US raids in the area around Tikrit, considered Saddam's hometown, north of Baghdad. The two hail from the same village, Aujah, just outside Tikrit itself.

When in power, Saddam was rarely seen without Mahmud, considered his most trusted adviser, who shadowed the president and was charged with handing down his orders to Iraqi ministries and ensuring his personal safety.

With his signature beret and moustache, the former adviser was number four on a US list of 55 most wanted members of Saddam's regime, outranked only by Saddam's two sons, Uday and Qusay, and the ousted president himself.

The United States said in April, shortly before the fall of the Iraqi regime, that it intended to put Saddam and his top lieutenants on trial for war crimes allegedly committed during the repressive reign of the Baath party.

Mahmud's official title was presidential secretary, but a British government dossier said he was responsible for Saddam's personal security, as well as defense, security and intelligence issues.

The dossier said Mahmud, a lieutenant general in the army, "is regarded by some as the real number two figure in the Iraqi leadership" as he controlled access to Saddam and could override government decisions. *AFP*

PHOTO taken June 16, 2002 shows ousted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his secretary Abid Hamid Mahmud known as Abed Hmoud in Baghdad. AFP

Rumsfeld: No major Iraqi bid to murder US troops

WASHINGTON—The United States on Wednesday blamed poorly organized supporters of ousted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein for a surge in deadly attacks on US-troops in Iraq.

White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer said a "loose-knit group of loyalists" to Saddam was believed responsible for growing sniper and other attacks in recent weeks.

"There continue to be elements that support Saddam Hussein, there continue to be loyalists to the Baath Party who want to engage in violence," Fleischer told reporters.

But Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said at a Pentagon news conference that there was no information suggesting a major, well-coordinated effort was under way to murder American soldiers and drive the US military home.

A US Army general said his troops on Wednesday raided two farmhouses near Tikrit and seized millions of dollars apparently set aside to pay bounties for killing American soldiers. But he said attacks on the troops were not slowing US efforts to normalize life in the country.

Since President George W. Bush declared on May 1 that major combat operations were over, at least 52 US troops have died in Iraq. Sixteen were killed in attacks and 36 in accidents and other "non-hostile" incidents, according to the Pentagon.

"I think the American people have a very good center of gravity and I wouldn't sell them short if I were you," Rumsfeld said when asked whether patience might be growing short at home over the continuing deaths of US troops in Iraq.

"I believe that they feel that this is a worthwhile effort on our part, something that reflects the American spirit. And they recognize the difficulty of the task," he said. *Reuters*

Bush defends Blair over Iraq intelligence

WASHINGTON—US President George W. Bush on Wednesday defended British Prime Minister Tony Blair against allegations he exaggerated evidence of Iraq's alleged weapons program.

"He (Blair) operated on very sound intelligence and those accusations are simply not true," Bush said in a show of support for his embattled Iraq war ally.

Blair and Bush have been dogged by critics who allege they may have hyped the threat posed by Baghdad to build the case for war.

But Blair in particular faces mounting political pressure at home to produce evidence of banned Iraqi weapons that he said justified Britain joining the United States in military action.

US forces have not found chemical or biological weapons since ousting Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in April.

Bush has cited the discovery of suspected biolabs as proof of progress in the weapons hunt, and White House officials say it will take time to uncover the extent of Iraq's illicit programs.

"This has been a very careful search, and a search that has turned up things that we have previously talked about applying to the weapons of mass destruction program that the Iraqis had," White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer said.

Bush has dismissed those questioning his justification for the invasion of Iraq as "revisionist historians."

US lawmakers on the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee have started a review of what intelligence agencies told Bush administration officials about the threat posed by Iraq before the war.

"If there's a problem with intelligence it doesn't mean that anybody misled anybody. It means that intelligence is an art and not a science," said Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz.

Compared to the months leading up to the war in Iraq, when Bush and Blair conferred almost daily, the White House has disclosed few calls between the two leaders since their April 8 meeting in Northern Ireland. *Reuters*

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President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Second Route of RORO Food Highway inaugurated in Manila

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. led other government officials in the inaugural run of the second route of the Strong Republic Nautical Highway (SRNH) at Pier 4 in North Harbor, Tondo, Manila, last June 18, 2003. They were joined by Official Development Assistance Secretary Marita Jimenez, NEDA Director General Romulo Neri, DBP Chairman Vitaliano Nanagas, Marina Administrator Oscar Sevilla, and PPA General Manager Al Cusi.

The inaugural run kicked off with cocktails and a tour of the newly inaugurated Eva Macapagal SuperTerminal at Pier 15 in South Harbor, Port Area, Manila.

It was followed by dinner on board Superferry 5 at Pier 4 hosted by WG&A SuperFerry's President & CEO Endika Aboitiz.

"WG&A would like to believe that our role in the national economy is to enable trade and take the lead in improving the domestic shipping industry. Tonight we will witness the loading of the first RRTS cargoes and WG&A is in the forefront," said Aboitiz in his welcome address.

First Gentleman Arroyo, Agriculture Secretary Lorenzo, and other Officials then witnessed the actual loading of cargo into Superferry 5 before it embarked for Cagayan de Oro later in the evening. Three trucks carrying a signage of the President's SRNH Food Highway Campaign drove into SuperFerry 5 loaded with a variety of agricultural materials, mostly bales of Empty sacks to be loaded with NFA rice sourced in Mindanao to be shipped back to Luzon.

Things to Know about RRTS

Q: What is the Strong Republic Nautical Highway?

A: The Strong Republic Nautical Highway (SRNH) refers to the Road Ro-RoTerminal System (RRTS) which is the network of terminals all over the country regardless of the distance travelled and linked by Ro-Ro vessels. The SRNH does not only involve shipping lines but road transportation as well.

Q: Why is the SRNH more popularly known as the RoRo Food Highway?

A: It is also called the RoRo Food Highway because it is expected to bridge the food baskets of Mindanao with the rich consumer markets of Luzon.

Q: Whose project is the SRNH?

A: The SRNH is the project of the the President of the Republic of the Philippines Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. The lead implementing agency is the Department of Agriculture.

Q: What is the legal basis of the SRNH?

A: In January 22, 2003, the President signed Executive Order No. 170,"a new policy promoting the participation of and investment by the private sector in the development of a Road Roll-on/Roll-off Terminal System." In June 9, 2003, the President signed Executive Order No. 170-A expanding the coverage of the System to "the network of terminals all over the country, regardless of distance covered and linked by Ro-Ro vessels."

Q: What is the objective of the SRNH?

A: The objective of the SRNH is to further support the agri-fisheries and the food security programs of the Government and to reduce the cost of inter-island transportation.

Q: What tangible benefits are expected from the success of the SRNH?

A: With RoRo facilities, shipments are no longer off-loaded for re-transporting thereby cutting down on handling time and stevedoring costs, consequently ensuring better quality and price stability of produce. The RoRo food highway opens an alternate option for commodity flow and product mobility.

Q: Is there a market for the SRNH?

A: The country's corn production is expected to increase by 5.7 percent this year while rice yields could double up by 2005. The country is also poised to become self-sufficient in sugar production, and with possibilities of a net surplus, could supply the US with another 20,000 to 50,000 MTs on top of fully meeting its 13.5 percent share of the total US sugar import quota at higher than local price. Fruits and vegetables from Mindanao are also expected to make probing trips to Metro Manila while the completion of 12 regional tilapia hatcheries by year end will result in abundant inland fish harvests. The RoRo system dovetails with the agri-program to energize and enrich the countryside.

Q: What is the plan for the SRNH?

A: Three Ro-Ro routes are being developed to complement the Pan Philippine Highway which services the eastern portion of the country. The highway also has RoRo links in Sorsogon, Northern Samar, Southern Leyte and Surigao del Norte.

Q: What is the first Ro-Ro route?

A: The first Ro-Ro route was launched in March 2003. It starts from Batangas down to Zamboanga del Norte. The sea linkages of the first RO-RO route includes Batangas-Calapan, Roxas, Oriental Mindoro-Caticlan, Aklan, Iloilo to Bacolod and Dumaguete - Dapitan. It opened flexible routes for the National Food Authority to move rice, corn and palay. The route has also been successful in identifying the commodity needs of Mindoro, Negros and Panay Islands and inducing tourism traffic from Luzon and Mindanao to Boracay through Caticlan.

Q: What is the second Ro-Ro route?

A: President Arroyo signed last June 9, 2003, Executive Order 170-A opening the second route, or long haul route, linking Cagayan de Oro, Dumaguete, Batangas and Manila. The long haul route begins with separate land segments from fruit-rich Davao and corn-and-tuna abundant General Santos, passing through the livestock and salad bowl of Bukidnon for an average of five to six hours. The 30-hour sea segment then starts from Cagayan de Oro as hub, links with the Visayas through Dumaguete, continues on to service Southern Luzon and Bicol through Batangas City and finally ends in the port of Manila to supply population-heavy Metro Manila and Central and Northern Luzon.

Q: What is the third Ro-Ro route?

A: Department of Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo, Jr. said that a third food route to be billed as the Grains Highway will feature mechanized production, processing and bulk handling and cross-shipment of corn from General Santos and Dapitan in Mindanao, Cebu in the Visayas, and Isabela, Subic Bay, Batangas and Manila in Luzon.

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Q: What is the role of WG&A SuperFerry in the SRNH? Why is your company the only private company featured in the advertisements which came out in the newspapers?

A: WGA SuperFerry strongly supports the SRNH program of President Arroyo. In particular, the RoRo portion of the second Ro-Ro route will be serviced by WG&A Superferries departing every Friday from Cagayan de Oro.

Q: Who will service the other routes cited in the SRNH plan?

A: There are existing operators servicing the first Ro-Ro route (SHORT HAUL ROUTES).

WG&A is currently the only operator servicing the second Ro-Ro route (LONG HAUL ROUTES). WG&A is opening the Manila-Cagayan de Oro -Batangas/Manila as a pilot link to make sure that everything works well before opening the service to the rest of the ports currently serviced by WG&A. All Ro-Ro routes planned for the SRNH are open to all private entrepreneurs.

Q: Who can we call for more information on the SRNH program of President Arroyo and RoRo routes?

A: The following government agencies can be contacted for further inquiries about the SRNH:

Office of Development Assistance Absorption Office - ASEC

Anne Lontoc (02) 536-0512 local 807
Department of Agriculture - ASEC Barry Poliquit at (02) 928-7011
Maritime Industry Authority - Dir. Gloria Banas at (02) 521-8045
Philippine Ports Authority - Mr. Robert Uy at (02) 527-8381

Q: Who can we call for more information on the second Ro-Ro route?

A: Contact WGA SuperFerry Customer Service: (02) 528-7400 for Manila and (08822) 722-572 for Cagayan de Oro.

Long Haul Route
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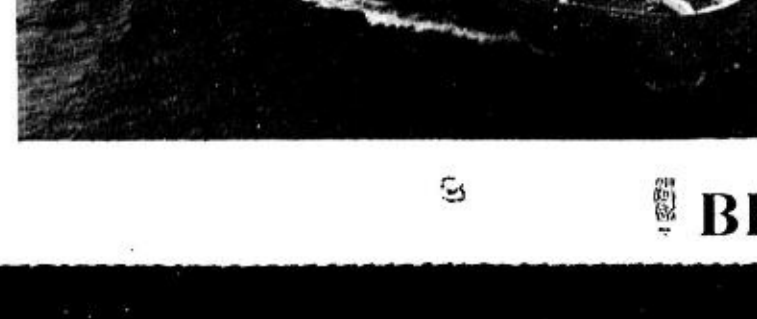

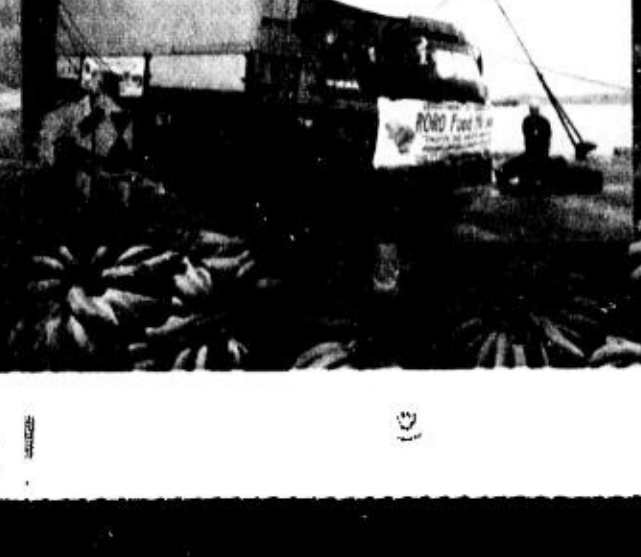

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Racegoers wearing traditional "Top Hats-and-Tails" watch the racing from The Queen's Stand at Epsom Downs, southern England, in this June 5, 1999 file photo. The Derby race meet is one of the main events of the year on the English social calendar. AP

Another birthday in isolation for freedom fighter Suu Kyi

BANGKOK—Burma pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi spent her 58th birthday in detention on Thursday as supporters planned vigils around the world and diplomatic pressure mounted on the country's military rulers to free her.

Around 100 Burma exiles lit 58 candles on a birthday cake and shouted anti-junta slogans outside the Burma Embassy in Bangkok as part of protests planned in a dozen cities around the world, including London, Brussels and Washington.

But in Rangoon the military showed no signing of easing a crackdown on Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), with a handful of plainclothes security officers milling around the party's padlocked headquarters.

While the junta has held Nobel laureate Suu Kyi virtually incommunicado at undisclosed locations since a May 30 clash between her supporters and a pro-junta group, the European Union and the United States have threatened more economic sanctions.

But the reaction of its Asian neighbors is more likely to worry ruling generals in Burma, also called Myanmar.

This week the region's main political group, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations broke with three decades of tradition to criticize one of its own, with foreign ministers saying they wanted Suu Kyi freed soon.

Those neighbors are under mounting pressure from Washington.

"Together, we must tell the Burmese leaders to free Aung San Suu Kyi, to free her supporters, and to free the people of Burma," US Secretary of State Colin Powell told a gathering of foreign ministers in Cambodia on Wednesday.

Burma Foreign Minister Win Aung, also in Cambodia for the Asean meeting, said Suu Kyi would be freed but did not say when.

"Of course when I go back home (I) will take with me the... concerns expressed by other ministers during the meeting and will submit to my leadership what I have heard," he said in an interview with CNN broadcast on Thursday.

But as Suu Kyi knows after spending seven of the last 14 years confined by the junta to Buddhist meditation and playing piano at her lakeside house in central Rangoon, international pressure has so far failed to bring change in the country.

The army has ruled the country since a 1962 coup, ignored a 1990 landslide election victory by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy and kept hundreds of activists imprisoned for a decade.

"It's important that Burma gets the message from Asean that it's not business as usual," a Western diplomat said. "But they haven't been very receptive to what has been said before."

UN envoy Razali Ismail, who was instrumental in persuading the junta to free Suu Kyi from her last spell of house arrest in May 2002, is the only outsider to have seen her since May 30.

He left Rangoon last week saying Suu Kyi was in good spirits, and had not been injured in the violence that erupted at the end of a tour to central and northern Burma.

Dissidents and some diplomats say a group of pro-junta youths, wielding bamboo and iron rods, set upon Suu Kyi's convoy and local villagers, killing at least 70. The government says four people died in the clash.

During the trip Suu Kyi, the daughter of independence hero Aung San, drew large crowds, to the irritation of the junta.

"I thought people would do something because Suu Kyi was attacked," said Aung Zaw, editor of a Thai-based magazine set up by Burma exiles. "But the people I've spoken to in Burma are so afraid. They just ask, who outside will help us.'"

Pressure from China, a major supplier of arms to Burma's junta, is key to any change in the country. But diplomats say this is unlikely to happen because of Beijing's ambitions to channel trade from southern China through Burma sea ports. *Reuters*

SARS vaccine 1 year away

SINGAPORE—It will take at least a year to develop a widely usable vaccine against Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, a World Health Organization expert said at a scientific conference here Thursday.

Dr. Marie-Paule Kieny, the director of the WHO's Initiative for Vaccine Research program, said the SARS virus is still relatively unknown although its genetic sequence was uncovered in April.

"I don't see a vaccine for large-scale deployment for at least a year," she told reporters at the Scientific Conference on SARS Research.

"Vaccines take months to develop... even for the common influenza, vaccines for new strains take at least six months to develop," Kieny explained.

SARS is believed to be caused by a member of the coronavirus family, and there is no effective treatment for the pneumonia-like disease that has a mortality rate of seven to 15 percent of patients.

Vaccines are seen as the long-term solution for SARS, but with the epidemic, largely affecting East Asia, receding, WHO officials fear people would get complacent and interest in the search for a vaccine would wane.

"Although SARS is largely controlled, it may come back and we cannot afford not to have a vaccine... continued public investment and involvement is crucial to ensure the demand in the market," Kieny said.

The development of better diagnostic kits is another area to fortify in the fight against SARS, Singapore Ministry of Health's Director, Tan Chorh Chuan, said at the one-day meeting.

"We need better tools that are more sensitive and specific, that can detect cases early. It also has to be relatively cheap and accessible," Tan said.

"We need them so we will not play catch-up all the time," he added.

The conference was co-organized by the WHO and MOH. It provided a forum for presentations and discussions by key WHO officials and top researchers in the local and international medical and scientific community. *AFP*

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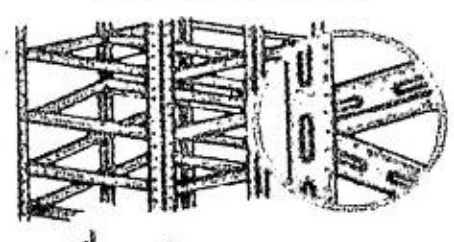

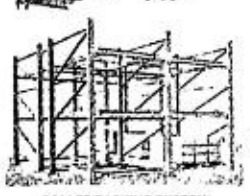

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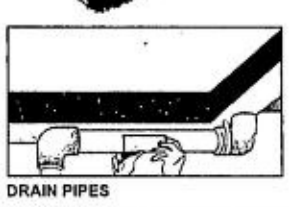

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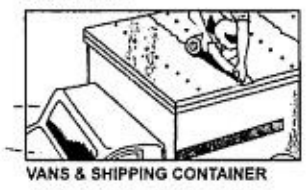

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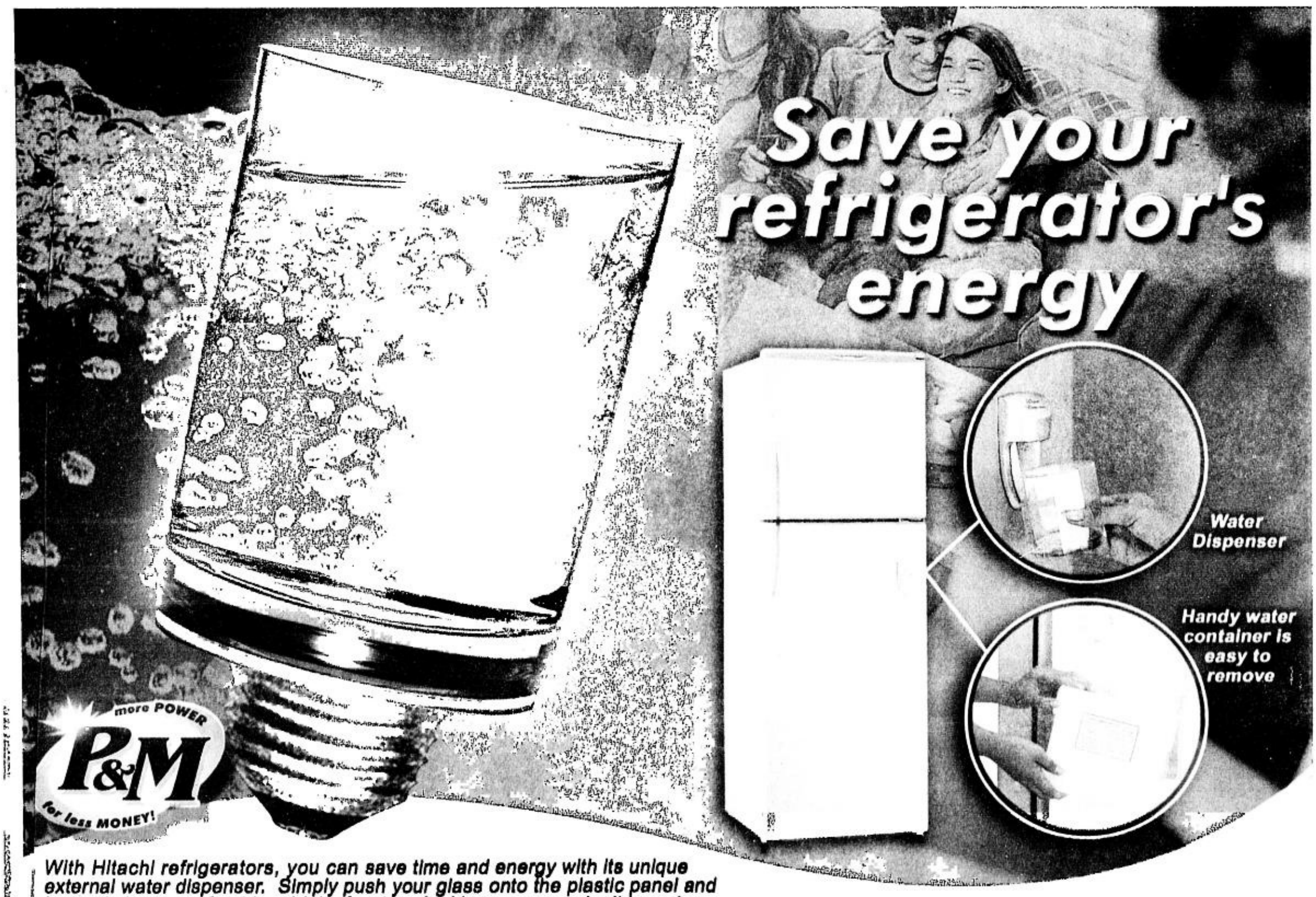

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Iran's nuke ambition sparks bitter row with US

WASHINGTON/TEHRAN—A bitter row raged between Tehran and Washington on Wednesday over Iran's nuclear ambitions as hundreds protested in Iran for an eighth day and four exiles set themselves ablaze in anger at a roundup of Iranian exiles in France.

President George W. Bush said on Wednesday the world must make clear to Iran that "we will not tolerate" its government building a nuclear weapon and once again underlined US backing for pro-democracy protests in Iran.

Tehran, accusing Washington of interference by backing the protests, said the United Nations had tailored a damning report to suit the US view that Iran is using a civil power program to obtain nuclear arms via the back door which it denies.

A report by the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency that was debated in Vienna on Wednesday said Tehran had "failed to report certain nuclear material and activities," but was making amends.

Speaking at the White House, Bush used some of his strongest language about Iran since linking Tehran with Iraq and North Korea as three "axis of evil" states in early 2002.

"The international community must come together to make it very clear to Iran that we will not tolerate construction of a nuclear weapon," Bush told reporters.

In Tehran, however, Iran's President Mohammad Khatami was adamant that Iran had no intention of building atomic weapons.

"We announce that not only we do not want to obtain nuclear weapons but also we are among the ones who took the initiative in saying we want a region without nuclear weapons," the reformist president told a news conference Wednesday.

The IAEA report said Iran repeatedly breached anti-nuclear treaties over the last 12 years by failing to declare the import, processing and storage of nuclear material.

"If Iran's intentions are peaceful, why did it engage in a long-term pattern of safeguards violations and evasions regarding a number of its nuclear... activities," Kenneth Brill, US ambassador to the United Nations in Vienna, said.

Ali Salehi, Iran's representative to the IAEA, told the 35-nation board of governors that the report "could have been crafted in a more partial, fair and balanced manner."

"It is an open secret that this is a politically motivated, politically charged issue," Salehi told reporters after Wednesday's session of 23 speeches ended.

Iran insists its nuclear program is for peaceful civilian generation of electrical power but the United States believes Tehran wants a nuclear weapon. US officials question why Iran would need nuclear-generated power given its oil wealth.

Bush offered strong support for Iranians protesting against the Islamic republic, saying they need to know the United States "stands squarely by their side." *Reuters*

AN IRANIAN lies on the road after setting himself on fire during a protest near the headquarters of the French counter intelligence agency, June 18, in Paris. At least three Iranians set themselves on fire Wednesday after Tuesday's massive raid by the agency on the offices of Iranian opposition group the People's Mujahedeen of Iran. AP

Gay bishop says he brings hope to homosexuals

LONDON—A gay clergyman appointed as a Church of England bishop said in an interview published Thursday that he feels like a "symbol of hope" for homosexuals, but fears his appointment could create divisions within the Church.

Jeffrey John, recently named as the new Bishop of Reading, also said he would remain with his male partner of 27 years, although he insisted the relationship was now celibate.

"It is perfectly clear that the relationship is going to last," John was quoted as saying in The Times of London. "We have been together for 27 years and we will remain together. But the relationship has not been sexually expressed for years."

John's appointment by the Bishop of Oxford, the Right Rev. Richard Harries, has drawn criticism from senior clergyman in the Church of England as well as from high-ranking Anglicans abroad.

Nine Church of England bishops wrote an open letter earlier this week expressing concern over the move, which they warned could divide the Anglican movement, while the Archbishop of the West Indies and the Primate of Nigeria have called for John to step down because of his support for same-sex relationships.

John told The Times that opposition to his appointment had made him consider quitting, but he suggested he would stay in the job.

"I am considering it (withdrawing) all the time. I did not apply for the job, one does not apply to become a bishop," he said. "It is terrible to feel that I am a cause of division and fragmentation.

"But at the same time I have received huge numbers of messages of support, people saying, 'You have to go ahead with this for us.' I have become a symbol of hope for an awful lot of people." *AP*

Suicide bomber hits Israel grocery, kills owner

JERUSALEM—A Palestinian suicide bomber blew up in a grocery store in northern Israel on Thursday, killing its owner in an attack that threw a US-backed peace plan deeper into turmoil.

The blast in the farming community of Sdeh Trumot coincided with failed efforts by Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas to persuade militants to call a truce with Israel and preceded a Middle East visit by US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Witness Asher Ben-Moussa said the bomber was a young man carrying a bag and dressed in jeans and a short-sleeved shirt.

"He walked up to the grocery store, all the while looking me in the eye," Ben-Moussa, who had been sitting at a nearby bus stop, told Israel Radio.

"He touched several bottles of wine near the door and waited only 10 seconds before going inside and blowing up. Then everything flew toward me."

Medics said the store's owner was caught in the blast and died in hospital. The suicide bomber was also killed.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the early morning attack, 15 km east of the West Bank city of Jenin.

After the bombing, Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz told reporters the militant Hamas and Islamic Jihad groups were "continuing to (carry out) terror activities against Israel, and this is the main obstacle" blocking progress in peacemaking.

Meeting Hamas leaders in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, Abbas made little headway in his efforts to persuade them to declare a ceasefire with Israel despite what security sources said was Israeli agreement to curb attacks on militants. *Reuters*

LUSTER at the Puerto Vallarta Police Station June 18, in Puerto Vallarta City, Mexico. AP

Bounty hunter captures Max Factor heir wanted for drugging, raping 3 women

LOS ANGELES—A US bounty hunter in Mexico on Wednesday captured the fugitive heir to the Max Factor cosmetics fortune, who faces 124 years in jail for drugging and raping three women, US authorities said.

Andrew Luster, 39, was arrested along with the man-hunter and a US television crew in the seaside resort of Puerto Vallarta after an attempted citizen's arrest of the heir—who had been on the lam for five months—went wrong.

"He's in custody and he is coming back to this country to serve his time," the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Bob Mack told reporters.

The FBI and Hawaii-based bounty hunter Duane "Dog" Chapman—who apparently hopes to cash in on a 10,000-dollar reward on Luster's head—were both tipped off by a US tourist who recognized Luster, FBI officials said.

But Chapman got to Luster—who was convicted in a court in California's Ventura County in January and sentenced in absentia a month later after skipping his one million dollar bail on Jan. 3—first.

But Mexican police were called to the scene in the early hours of Wednesday as Chapman tried to slap handcuffs on the make-up heir after witnesses reported a loud street scuffle.

The fugitive, the bounty-hunter, two of his assistants and an attendant crew from the US TV crime show "America's Most Wanted" crew were all taken into custody.

Another FBI told reporters that Chapman's actions were not condoned by the FBI and that he would get no help in getting out of jail in Mexico, where bounty hunting is regarded legally as kidnapping.

"He's out there apprehending on his own—that's not something we endorse at the FBI—and in another country to boot," he said adding that the FBI was working to recover Luster either through simple deportation or extradition.

A source in Chapman's office in Honolulu said the bounty hunter had been tracking Luster since he fled mid-way through his trial in January after vowing publicly to find him.

Luster is the great-grandson of Hollywood make-up mogul Max Factor. He lived off a trust fund and real estate investments believed to be worth around $31 million.

He was sentenced to 124 years in prison for spiking the drinks of his victims before raping them in his luxury home and videoing some of the acts.

Luster was convicted on 86 out of 87 charges stemming from his sexual relations with the three women, including rape, poisoning, sodomy, possession of drugs and of weapons.

During his trial, victims testified that Luster spiked their drinks with the "date rape" drug gammahydroxybutyrate, or GHB, before taking them home and raping them while they were unconscious, videotaping two of the assaults.

The allegations against the make-up heir came after a 21-year-old student came forward in 2000 claiming that Luster had drugged and raped her. That prompted a police search of his luxury home, which turned up scores of videos as well as quantities of GHB. *AFP*

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Finland PM resigns over Iraq leak scandal

HELSINKI—Finland's first woman prime minister resigned on Wednesday after only two months in office for allegedly using leaked secret information on Iraq to help win March parliamentary elections.

"If trust goes, it goes. I do not have that trust," Anneli Jaatteenmaki told a news conference.

A government source said Jaatteenmaki, 48, would not go to a European Union summit in Greece this week. Deputy Prime Minister Antti Kalliomaki will go instead.

Jaatteenmaki was accused of using confidential information on talks between her predecessor Paavo Lipponen and US President George W. Bush on Iraq and other issues for an election attack on Lipponen, who was seeking a third term.

"I did not ask for secret papers," she told reporters.

Earlier, Jaatteenmaki told parliament she had "neither asked for nor got secret Foreign Ministry documents" but an aide to the President Tarja Halonen said she had made such a request.

Presidential aide Martti Manninen told Finnish news agency STT that Jaatteenmaki, while in opposition as the Center Party leader, had approached him before parliamentary elections asking him for information on Iraq.

"In the meeting Jaatteenmaki was interested in Iraq material and gave me a secret fax number for keeping in contact," he was quoted as saying.

His comments came just after Jaatteenmaki said the faxes she got from Manninen had come as a surprise.

"I had not requested these (faxes) and they came as a total surprise to me," Jaatteenmaki told parliament.

Her resignation caps two tumultuous days after Manninen's admission that he leaked the information. Jaatteenmaki gave her resignation to Halonen, who accepted it.

"(Halonen) has asked the Jaatteenmaki government to continue as a caretaker government until a new government is formed," the president's office said in a statement.

Her resignation stunned the nation's 5.2 million people, who pride themselves on stability and emerging from a recession in the early 1990s to become one of the EU's healthiest economies.

Jaatteenmaki started on April 17, making her Center Party-led government the shortest non-caretaker administration for almost 60 years.

Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson, whose country has close historical ties with Finland, said: "It is a tragedy for her personally and a big setback for Finnish politics."

A spokesperson for the Center Party said it hoped to continue the government coalition, which groups the Center along with the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Swedish People's Party, which represents the country's Swedish language minority.

The Center and SDP will hold meetings next week on the road ahead. The resignation is a major setback for the Center, which had only just returned to power after eight years. *Reuters*

FINLAND'S Prime Minister Anneli Jaatteenmaki makes a statemen on the so-called Iraq papers during the parliament's plenary session in Helsinki, June 18. Jaatteenmaki said she would resign after she used leaked secret state information on Iraq during March parliamentary elections. REUTER

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Land Bank rob suspect arrested

BAGUIO CITY—Benguet police arrested on Wednesday the suspected mastermind of the P15-million robbery that hit Land Bank of the Philippines branch in Bontoc, Mt. Province, in March.

Marcelino Nginhina of Ifugao was nabbed in his home at Barangay Gundaway in Cobarroguis, Quirino, police said.

Land Bank had been struck four times in the last few years by highway robberies. The most recent robbery occurred on March 25, and had cost the bank's Bontoc branch that week's deposits.

Late in May, LBP president Margarito Teves dissolved the bank's Cordillera office, and reassigned its Bontoc branch personnel, including its manager Genaro Dumpayan.

Dumpayan told the INQUIRER by telephone from Manila that their transfer was part of a prescheduled management rotation, and was not a result of the robbery. He is scheduled for transfer to Bangued, Abra.

But Dumpayan said as early as March, police had known that the robbery mastermind was based in Cagayan Valley. *Frank Cimatu and Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

3 kidnap suspects, victim die in clash

By Russell Arador and Ronald Dizon, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*

TARLAC CITY—Three suspected members of the Waray-Waray kidnap-for-ransom gang were killed while a policeman was wounded in a shootout on Wednesday along the Barangay Baras-Baras and Barangay Tibag stretch of the Romulo Highway here, police said.

The kidnap victim, Letty Co Tan, a businesswoman, died before reaching the hospital.

Based on ID cards recovered from the suspects, two of them were identified as Roel Gapasin Caacbay and Ismael Adella Corocoto, both 25, of Caloocan City.

Wounded was SPO4 Joselito Nelmida. He is confined at the Central Luzon Doctors' Hospital.

The shootout ensued after three men aboard a red Lite Ace van fired at policemen manning a roadblock set up along a portion of Romulo Highway at Sitio Cumintang in Barangay Baras-Baras west of this city.

Another roadblock was set up at the adjacent Sitio Barbon in Barangay Tibag as a result of information received by the Tarlac police that "heavily armed men" in a red Lite Ace van would pass the Romulo Highway.

As the occupants of the van were fleeing toward a ricefield, another group of four armed men aboard a jeepney engaged the policemen in a firefight. They, too, fled toward the ricefield.

A member of the first group was killed while two others were killed in the second group.

Pursuit operations were underway for the capture of four gang members.

Found dying inside the jeepney was 50-year-old Letty Co Tan, a businesswoman reported to have been kidnapped in Parañaque City on Wednesday.

She was identified by her husband who told police that the gang was demanding P20 million as ransom. She died before reaching the hospital.

The police said Tan bore marks of strangulation and had bullet wounds in the chin and neck. Police said they were still determining if the woman was killed in the crossfire.

In Manila, Philippine National Police chief, Director General Hermogenes Ebdane yesterday ordered an investigation of the shootout.

Ebdane said in a press conference that he wanted to find out if the policemen, led by the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response team, were the ones who accidentally killed Tan.

Pacer chief Alan Purisima maintained the victim was killed by her abductors. "Our conscience is clear but we're willing to be investigated anytime," he said. *With reports from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Christian Esguerra in Manila*

ROUNDUP

Suspected robbers gunned down

DAVAO CITY—Motorcycle-riding men shot dead two suspected pickpockets shortly after they were released from detention on Monday afternoon. The victims were identified as Wilfredo Gabia, 33, and Noel Valdueza, 38, both of Barangay 22-C. Reports said the two had just boarded a "multicab" minutes after they were freed by the Heinous Crime and Investigation Section of the city police when two men on a motorcycle appeared from behind and fired at them. *Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

2 die while repairing well

BANTAY, Ilocos Sur—Two men were killed while repairing a well in Barangay Taleb on Tuesday. Police identified the victims as Domingo Padre, 48, owner of a chichacorn (a flavored corn snack) factory, and his helper Edgar Madriaga, 21. Reports said Madriaga was fixing a pump inside a 76-foot deep well when he experienced leg cramps and shortness of breath. Padre, who was supervising his men in the nearby factory of the Ilocos Food Products Inc., tried to rescue Madriaga but he slipped and fell inside the well. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Baguio benefit concert

BAGUIO CITY—Local artists will stage a benefit concert on June 28 to raise funds for the operation of Aldwyn Baldo, a month-old baby suffering from a congenital heart disease. The concert will be staged at the Woodsland Music Bar in Maharlika Building, Session Road. Baldo, whose parents are public schoolteachers in Itogon, Benguet, was confined at the Saint Louis University Hospital of the Sacred Heart. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Abu Sayyaf leader wounded?

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The military on Wednesday claimed that Abu Sayyaf leader Hamsiraji Sali and several other bandits had been wounded during a firefight in Barangay Upper Kapayawan in Isabela City on Tuesday morning. Sali, who has a P5-million bounty on his head, rose to notoriety during the Sipadan and Dos Palmas hostage-taking incidents. Col. Bonifacio Ramos, head of the Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade, said the clash, which resulted to the death of an Abu Sayyaf member, erupted four days after soldiers recovered the headless body of 17-year-old Ariel Royo in Barangay Upper Manggas. "We surmised that this boy Royo discovered their group, so Sali's group decided to behead him, but they failed to keep their other belongings during their withdrawal," Ramos said. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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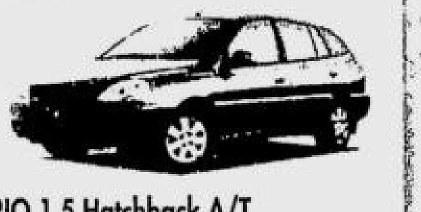
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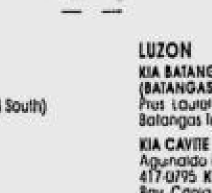
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4. The buyer should fill up all the entries on the raffle coupon and drop it at the dropbox located at the KIA dealership where he bought his KC2700 vehicle. Raffle coupons that were not completely filled up will be disqualified from the raffle.
5. Deadline of submission of entries is until the end of business hours of September 25, 2003.
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7. The raffle prizes are as follows:
   Grand Prize - A choice of a Pregio RS van or a Rio HB(A/T)
   Second Prize - 2 Boracay Family Trips - 3 days/2nights accomodation for a family of 4, inclusive of airfares and baon of P10,000.00 (validity is 6 months from date of issue)
   Third Prize - 20 units of Nokia 3530 celfone kit (simpack with P100.00 load)
   Fourth Prize - 15 SM gift certificates worth P5,000.00 each (with 1 year validity)
   Consolation Prize - KIA premium items worth P1,000.00 each
8. Appropriate taxes will be borne by the grand and second prize winners. Registration requirements, insurance and other related documents shall be for the account of the grand prize winner. Second Prize is not transferrable but may be converted to cash.
9. All winners will be notified by registered mail and must present the original invoice of the vehicle purchased, one(1) valid ID and their winning coupon when claiming their prizes.
10. A customer can only win once; if a name is drawn more than once he/she gets the prize of higher value.
11. The name on the raffle coupon will be declared the winner.
12. Where to claim the prizes:
    a. Metro Manila winners may claim their prizes at Communicon, Inc., 1841 Buenconsejo St. Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City and look for Ms. Lei Mariano.
    b. Provincial winners will be assisted by the KIA dealership where they purchased their KIA KC2700. Communicon will send the 3rd prizes up to the consolation prizes directly to the winner. Winners of the grand and second prizes will have to claim their prizes at Communicon, Inc.
13. Winners may claim their prizes up to 60 days from the date of notification. Unclaimed prizes will be forfeited in favor of KMP with the concurence of DTI.
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Hike in Cebu power rates seen

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The order of the Energy Regulatory Commission for the National Power Corp. (Napocor) to increase its generation rate by 16 centavos has drawn mixed feelings from power consumers in Metro Cebu.

The good news: Cebu Private Power Corp. (CPPC), which supplies 62 megawatts of electricity to Visayan Electric Co. (Veco), may not close down as expected on July 25.

The bad news: This might trigger an increase in electric bills of Veco consumers in Metro Cebu.

Zoilo Cortes, Veco corporate secretary and head of its Economic Planning and Analysis Staff, said any rate increase in power generation would be passed on to the consumers through a pricing formula.

On May 15, the ERC approved a revised generation rate of Napocor in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. The rate is P2.12 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for Luzon, P2.24 for the Visayas, and P1.02 for Mindanao.

The Napocor-Visayas is currently charging Veco P2.08 per kWh.

However, Napocor, through Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm), filed a motion for reconsideration because it wanted a rate adjustment of P2.80/kWh.

ERC Chair Manuel Sanchez told the Napocor to implement the price granted to them pending resolution of its motion for reconsideration.

A local paper yesterday quoted Napocor officials as saying they had yet to see the ERC order, but the increase might be reflected on the June 25 billing to Veco.

Roger Lim, general manager of CPPC, said a P2.80 rate, if granted, would definitely ease their financial woes and the consumers would be given assurance of the company's continued operations.

But he admitted that the order had given them a chance not to shut down by July 25.

While the amount was negligible, he said "any increase of rate is a plus factor and can help in our operations," although, he added, they would be happier if a bigger increase would be granted to the Napocor.

CPPC officials earlier said they would stop operations on July 25 due to financial difficulties. They said they were selling power a lower rate despite high production cost after President Mapacagal-Arroyo reduced the Napocor's Power Purchase Adjustment to 40 centavos from P1.07.

The CPPC rates were two percent lower than the rates pegged by the Napocor. But company officials said they might reconsider if they were allowed to increase prices.

CPPC, a joint venture of East Asia Utilities and Veco, supplies 60 mW to Veco. If the IPP stops operations, Veco will only have 20 mW of power reserve during peak hours.

Veco gets 50 percent of its supply from the Napocor and the rest from CPPC East Asia Utilities and Toledo Power Corp.

Lim said the effect of the new ERC order remained to be seen because they did not know when the Napocor would implement it.

When told that the Napocor might do so on June 25, Lim said this would give them a month to determine if the 16-centavo increase would be enough to sustain company operations.

Kanlaon spews ash; trekking prohibited

BACOLOD CITY—Mt. Kanlaon Volcano is restive again.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) has warned against trekking near the crater of Kanlaon because the active volcano was undergoing "a period of multiple ash explosions."

"The public is reminded not to venture within the 4-kilometer radius permanent danger zone because steam-driven ash explosions may occur suddenly and without warning," the Phivolcs said in a statement.

Alert level 1 was hoisted, meaning Kanlaon was on a restive state. Trekking or "any human activity" within the danger zone is prohibited.

The volcano ejected ash mildly at 2:22 p.m. on Wednesday, the Phivolcs said. A grayish steam ash cloud was seen rising to about 400 meters above the summit of the crater before drifting to the southeast, it said.

The Phivolcs said the explosion was recorded as a low-frequency volcanic earthquake. Only two low-frequency volcanic earthquakes and one short harmonic tremor preceded the explosion.

Kanlaon, the highest peak in Central Visayas at 2,465 meters, is a favorite hiking destination. It dominates the 25,000-hectare Mt. Kanlaon National Park, one of the few surviving national parks in the country. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Paano makukuha ang inyong refund?

Para sa mga customers na komukonsumo ng 100 kilowatthours at pababa.

Noong Hunyo 6, 2003 sinimulan ng MERALCO ang pagbibigay ng refund sa higit 1.4 milyong customers na kumukonsumo ng 100 kilowatthours at pababa. Naririto ang ilang dapat tandaan para mapadali ang pagkuha ng inyong refund.

Paano malalaman kung kasama kayo sa may refund
Tingnan ang inyong April 2003 bill. Kung 100 kilowatthours o mas mababa ang inyong konsumo, kasali kayo sa grupong nakatakdang mabigyan ng refund simula sa buwan na ito ng Hunyo 2003.

Tingnang maigi ang inyong June bill
Sa June bill ninyo nakalagay kung magkano ang refund at kung paano ito na-compute. Nakasaad dito kung saang branch maaaring mag-claim ng refund. Nakalagay rin kung kailan kayo maaaring pumunta para kunin ang inyong refund.

Kung walang nakalagay na detalye sa inyong Hunyo 2003 bill, maghintay lang po kayo ng abiso dahil maaring may nakitang pansamantalang problema sa pag-kwenta ng inyong refund.

Siguruhing kumpleto ang dala ninyong dokumento.
Narito ang listahan ng mga kailangan ninyong dalhin para mag-claim ng cash refund:

Kung ang service contract ay nakapangalan sa inyo (kayo ang registered customer)
a. **June 2003 bill**
b. **Isang (1) valid ID** na may litrato at pirma, tulad ng:
Driver's License
PRC license
Passport o
New SSS/GSIS/TIN ID
c. Xerox ng inyong valid ID at ng June 2003 bill

Kung kayo ang kinatawan o authorized representative ng registered customer:
a. **June 2003 bill**
b. **Authorization letter** na pirmado ng registered customer at nakasulat ang inyong pangalan bilang kinatawan
c. **Isang (1) valid ID ng registered customer** na may litrato at pirma,
d. **Dalawang (2) valid ID ninyo,** (ang kumukuha ng refund)
e. **Xerox ng mga sumusunod**
1. **Dalawang (2) valid ID ninyo**
2. **Isang (1) valid ID ng registered customer**
3. **June 2003 bill**

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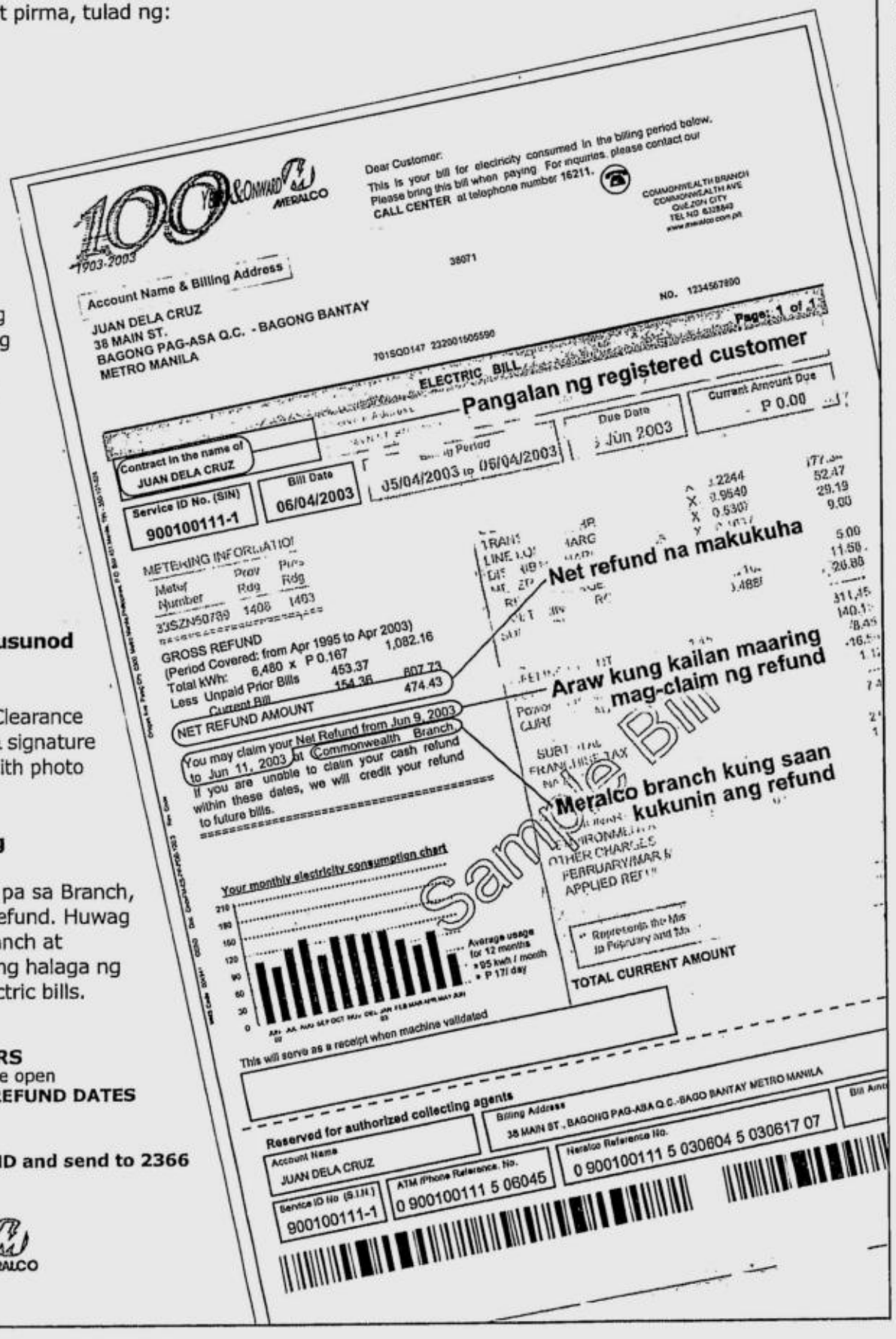

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Isabela priests call for voiding of poll results

ILAGAN, Isabela—At least 51 Catholic priests in the province's 35 towns and two cities have called for the nullification of the May 12 election results in the province's fourth congressional district because of alleged irregularities.

In a joint statement, the priests said they were convinced that the election was marred by irregularities and its results should be voided.

Lawyer Giorgidi Aggabao won over Dr. Asuncion Abaya in the special elections held to fill in the vacancy left by the late Rep. Antonio Abaya, husband of Dr. Abaya.

On May 23, Abaya's lawyers filed two petitions before the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET) to unseat Aggabao.

The priests praised the people "who stood for the truth" and exposed the irregularities in the elections. "We express our solidarity with the people who are outraged and bewildered by the most fraudulent election in Isabela."

They also appealed to concerned government agencies to prosecute those involved in the alleged electoral fraud.

Susan Dolores, San Isidro election officer, earlier told reporters that the election returns that she signed showed only an actual turnout of only more than 4,000.

However, the district board of election canvassers certified that in San Isidro, Aggabao got 7,217 votes, while Abaya got 633, or an actual turnout of 7,850.

Laila Bohol, lead counsel of Abaya, said the petitions they filed before the HRET were meant to nullify the proclamation of Aggabao and to ask the tribunal to order a re-canvass of election returns from San Isidro, San Agustin and Ramon towns.

Bohol claimed that ballot box switching and ballot tampering had occurred in those towns.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Aggabao on Tuesday. In a privilege speech he delivered last month, he denied accusations of poll fraud. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Stop canvassing, SC tells Comelec

SAN ISIDRO, Nueva Ecija—The Supreme Court ordered the Commission on Elections on Wednesday to stop the canvassing of votes of a former mayor here and directed Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos to observe the status quo in this town.

Mayor Sonia Lorenzo, whose leadership is disturbed by a flurry of orders from the Comelec for an immediate canvassing of votes of Nestor Magno, said she would not resign following the SC order.

The high court directed the Comelec, Abalos and Magno to file their comments within 10 days from receipt of its order.

Lorenzo, however, appealed to her constituents for sobriety and to allow the law to take its course.

She earlier raised the issue before the high court on whether the Comelec could order a new canvassing of votes without annulling her proclamation.

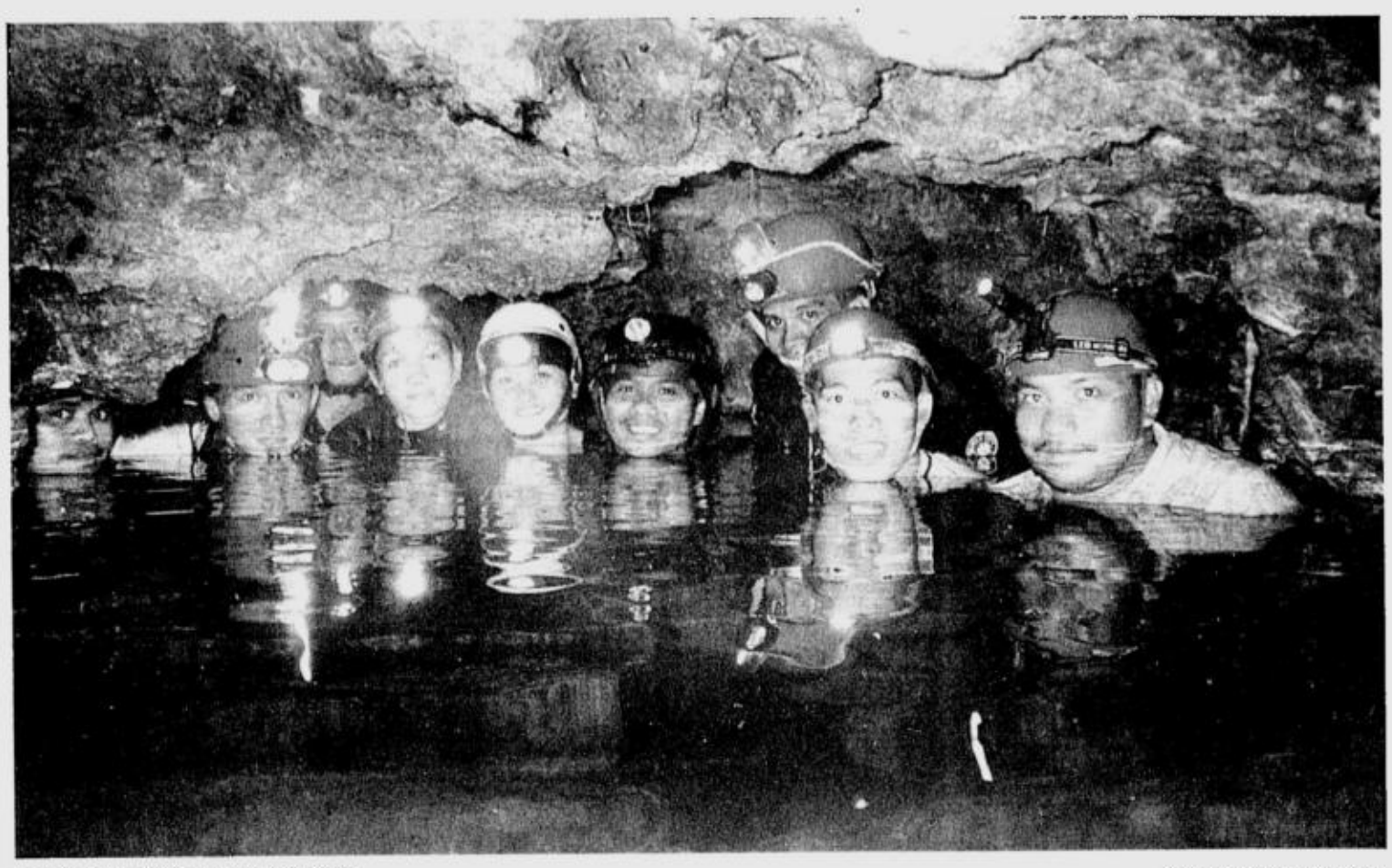
She also questioned the Comelec order to canvass the votes of Magno without hearing her petition to recall the order.

The Comelec issued the order on May 13 after the Supreme Court ruled that Magno was qualified to run for mayor. The ruling was followed by three more orders, including one on the canvassing of Magno's votes and the other on the transfer of the canvassing from the municipal hall to the Comelec main office in Manila.

Magno was disqualified by the Comelec in the 2001 elections on the ground that he had not completed the required five years from his discharge from probation as provided by the Omnibus Election Code.

Acting on Magno's petition, the high court ruled that he had no disqualification when he ran for mayor in 2001.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk



UNDERGROUND WONDER RYAN LIM/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Members of the Sandawa Apo and Edge Outdoor Adventure discover the depths of a cave and explore the wonders of spelunking during the 3rd National Caving Congress held recently in Kapalong, Davao del Norte.

Drug problem not that bad, says PDEA chief

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency chief Anselmo Avenido on Wednesday clarified that the drug problem in the country could no longer be considered alarming or worsening.

He also said the 3.4 million cited by Sen. Robert Barbers as the number of Filipinos hooked on drugs was based on the 1999 survey of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB). The board, he added, could not yet provide an updated figure because it was still conducting a new survey.

But Avenido said the drug problem had not worsened but was improving although it remained a big problem.

He claimed that the situation improved after the PDEA, in coordination with other law enforcement unit, conducted a series of crackdowns on suspected drug peddlers.

The PDEA was created on July 30 of last year after Republic Act No. 9165, otherwise known as the Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, was signed into law.

Ten months after it was established, Avenido said, the PDEA had arrested 6,500 drug traffickers and users nationwide.

The suspects, he added, were now behind bars after they failed to put up bail due to the stiff provisions in the new anti-drugs law.

During these operations, Avenido said P5 billion worth of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu was confiscated while three shabu laboratories were discovered and dismantled.

"Because of this, the prices of shabu is slowly increasing. Those shabu being sold cheap are either fake or mixed with alum," he said in Cebuano.

He, however, did not give the present selling price of shabu.

Avenido said the number of local drug syndicates operating in the country reached 175 and marijuana plantations, 98.

Based on its program of action, he said, the PDEA planned to dismantle at least one-third of the drug syndicates and marijuana plantations.

Avenido said he was also impressed at the cooperation of the public in their campaign against illegal drugs because many civilians had given information to his office.

Still, he urged families to report any member who was either using or selling illegal substance.

He asked the media and local government units to support the PDEA in its anti-drug campaign.

Supt. Vicente Loot, former chief of the defunct Regional Anti-Narcotics Office in Central Visayas said the drug traffickers in China were using what he called "guerrilla tactic" in smuggling illegal drugs to Cebu.

Based on the information he obtained last year, he said drug traffickers in China sent their chemists in the country for the production of shabu.

Another losing year for tobacco growers in North

CANDON CITY—Prices of Virginia and burley tobacco dropped by 35-60 percent because of poor quality.

This bad news was relayed by tobacco farmers during a dialogue with officials of the National Tobacco Administration at the Candon Civil Center on Wednesday.

The dialogue was part of the inquiry conducted by Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson on House Resolution 1195, which seeks to know the state of the tobacco industry, one of the biggest revenue earners in the region.

"It is the fourth in the last five years that our tobacco growers are at the losing end," Singson told the INQUIRER.

He said the average selling price of Virginia and burley tobacco last year was P38 and P25 a kilo, but this went down to P25 and P10 this year.

Worse hit were farmers from Pangasinan and Tarlac who planted Saplac, a combination of Virginia and burley tobacco. About 12 million kilos were left unsold.

Harry Tan, chair of Fortune Tobacco Corp., one of the biggest buyers of local tobacco, said 25 percent of the tobacco leaves the company bought from local farmers this year were salty or rejects.

Singson said farmers were threatened by globalization due to the influx of imported tobacco, particularly from China.

He said they were helping draw a master plan for the tobacco industry. "The plan will give us a clear idea what farmers, buyers and the NTA want," he said.

During the dialogue, the farmers were asked not to plant on suspected salty areas that would affect the marketability of their produce. They, in return, expressed their wish to sell their produce directly to buyers.

The farmers also assailed the government's lack of financial support, saying the NTA's P360-million budget in 2000 had been reduced to P90 million this year.
Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

US firm's subsidiary defies DENR on waste discharge

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE CEBU-based local subsidiary of the American firm FMC Marine Colloiods has defied orders of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to stop polluting the Mactan Channel with its sewage wastes.

FMC, a seaweed manufacturer and top Philippine exporter of carrageenan, insists on keeping its underwater pipes that discharge wastes directly to the channel. Its manufacturing plant is found in Barangay Looc in Mandaue City.

The company's managing director, Tita Tomayao, told Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun in a letter that it did not and never agreed to the cutting of its pipes or the construction of a canal or creek at the back of its premises.

"FMC did not and never agreed to discharge its effluents into the canal," Tomayao said.

She noted that it was the group of Editha Cabahug, chair of Barangay Looc, and Benson Dakay, president of the Seaweed Industry Association of the Philippines, that insisted that FMC cut its discharge pipes.

"It is unfair to FMC that after having gone through so much effort and expense, the Pollution Adjudication Board will just order to cut off the submarine pipes in order to accommodate the clamor raised by the SIAP and Cabahug," Tomayao said in her letter dated May 7, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER.

She said that since Cabahug and the SIAP were the ones who insisted on cutting the pipes, "they should be ordered to at least reimburse FMC for the cost of constructing its submarine outfall and pay for the cost of constructing its submarine outfall and pay for the cost of dismantling."

Dismantling alone would cost P300,000, she said.

Gozun responded to Tomayao in a letter dated June 4, saying FMC should comply with the PAB order and follow the earlier agreement with the multisectoral team that it would replace its pipes.

She noted that FMC agreed to this during a meeting held on April 30 meeting, which was prompted by a directive from President Macapagal-Arroyo. Representatives from Looc, Mandaue City, SIAP, the Environmental Management Bureau and the Department of Trade and Industry also attended the meeting.

However, in a May 20 letter to the DENR, FMC asked the PAB to reevaluate its order as it refused to cut the pipes.

Gozun said the DENR would wait for the company's next move before it takes another action. Nevertheless, she said, the agency's order stood and should be followed by FMC.

Barangay Looc residents had earlier accused FMC of polluting the Mactan Channel. In a letter to the environment secretary, they cited latest results of analyses of water samples taken in the area where the submarine discharge pipes is located indicated a 635 level of biological oxygen demand (BOD).

This is beyond the average level of waste discharge allowed in Philippine seas, which is 120 BOD, they said.

"This is the result of analysis undertaken by two EMB staff members in an unannounced check of water samples taken in the waters where FMC's submarine cables are located," Cabahug said in a Jan. 21 letter to the DENR.

The DENR has estimated that a clean-up of some 200 hectares of polluted areas of the Mactan Channel would cost some P1 billion.

Broadcasters in extort probed

Countdown for Justice

WAPILE

IT IS exactly 403 days today since Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Wapile, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—A lawmaker has asked the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) to investigate the alleged extortion activities of some broadcast journalists.

Rep. Antonio Cuenco said he would submit a list of media persons who allegedly used their radio programs to extort money from news sources, including him. He said he was willing to submit evidence and testify before the KBP.

Responding to the complaint, Bryan Madronero, KBP-Cebu chapter president, said his group might call the lawmaker to shed light on its investigation. He clarified that the probe had been on going even before the shooting of radio block timer Reynaldo Cortes at the parking lot of the Bureau of Customs on June 12.

Madronero, manager of the FM station Monster Radio, said the KBP had also been receiving complaints about some media persons using their radio programs to extort money from news sources.

The KBP Standard Authority was in charge of the investigation, he added.

Presidential political liaison officer Elberto Emphasis had earlier accused Cortes of being involved in extortion activities at the Customs office. This was vehemently denied by the radio commentator.

Emphasis said the shooting of Cortes should be a lesson to erring media persons.

In an interview over radio station dyLA, Cuenco said he, too, was victimized when one commentator attacked him in a radio program.

Later, he said, the same commentator went to his house to ask for money.

Cuenco has banned five Cebu-based media persons from the House of Representatives for allegedly extorting money from congressmen.

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Allies say Lacson drug war target

From page A1

driguez said.

He said Corpus' witness Ador Mawanay had already recanted his statements against Lacson.

House Minority Leader Gilbert Remulla said the President should separate politics from serious law enforcement if she was really serious in addressing the drug problem.

Remulla said the President should avoid making reckless accusations that drug money may be used to fund the electoral ambitions of some politicians without any proof.

At one time, Corpus even presented the picture of an alleged drug lord linked to Lacson. The person turned out to be the chief of staff of Sen. Robert Barbers.

"I'm not really surprised that Corpus is out there once again talking about the so-called involvement of politicians in narcopolitics," Remulla said.

People power

In Calamba, Laguna, Ms Macapagal urged Filipinos to rise up in another people power, this time to beat the illegal drug menace.

"Our crackdown against the illegal drug trade must have a strategic force behind it—this is the will, cooperation and action of our people. Let us harness the motive force of people power to defeat this enemy just as we are defeating terrorism," she said.

The President said the entire citizenry should advocate drug-free communities by exposing drug syndicates and pushers and by supporting the rehabilitation of drug addicts.

Complacency and indifference will be "our greatest enemy," the President said at the 142nd birth anniversary celebration of Dr. Jose Rizal in his hometown.

Ms Macapagal praised Barbers who said he was willing to resign from the Senate if the she would allow him to head the government's campaign against illegal drugs.

"Indeed a deep sense of sacrifice and statesmanship is needed among all our leaders to help us surmount this pervasive threat which cuts across almost all sectors and age levels," the President said.

Barber's offer

Ms Macapagal said Barbers' offer was being "seriously considered." But she later said Barbers could provide direction to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency without having to abandon his elective post.

The President said she called up PDEA head Anselmo Avenido Jr. yesterday morning and told him to immediately obtain "operational directions" from the senator.

Barbers, who belongs to the ruling party Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and is touted to be a vice presidential candidate, was a former police officer and interior secretary.

In the Senate, Sen. Joker P. Arroyo said Barbers should not resign from his job to help in the government's anti-drug campaign.

As chair of the Senate committee on drugs and public order, Barbers has oversight functions "to ensure that the law is implemented properly," Arroyo said.

For his part, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel cautioned the President against cloaking the PDEA or an appointed anti-drug czar with too much power to deal with transnatonal drug syndicates.

"The mandate of an anti-drug head cannot be given by the President. That's defined by law," Pimentel said, referring to the Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Pimentel told reporters that Barbers, "even if he resigns, cannot demand more powers than what the law already gives."

In Southern Mindanao, the PDEA said it had identified at least four drug lords operating in the region.

Two of the drug lords are businessmen residing in Davao City while the others have been moving from place to place, according to Supt. Wilkins Villanueva, PDEA regional director.

The four drug lords have not been "neutralized" as the agency has no solid evidence against them, Villanueva said. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac in Manila; and Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY. Portrait of Aung San Suu Kyi dressed in the Chin minority costume posing on a roadside during a visit to the Chin state in April 2003. The photo was released by a Southeast Asian human rights group on the occasion of her 58th birthday on Thursday. *Story in World, Page A13.* AP/ALTSEAN BURMA, HO

Cool it, Macapagal warns protesting Erap supporters

From page A1

institutional integrity of the high court, whose members former President Joseph Estrada has accused of conspiring with her, the military, the Church and the "elite" to unseat him.

"I shall not allow anarchy to override the pursuit of justice, or erode the foundations of our democratic system," she said.

On Monday, Estrada called on the people to close ranks and defend the Constitution and the rule of law. He said Edsa II stole not just the presidency but also the people's right to elect their own leader.

But he also said he was leaving it to the people to give him and themselves "justice."

On Tuesday, Estrada's supporters picketed the Supreme Court building and the homes of Chief Justice Hilario Davide and other members of the 15-seat tribunal.

The picketers assailed the alleged bias of the justices against Estrada, who is on trial for plunder and who has filed an impeachment complaint against several members of the high court.

Police are now securing the areas.

From his detention quarters at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center, Estrada said law enforcers should go easy on his supporters.

"Their protest actions are happening far away from where the justices are. Why block them?" he said in a phone interview.

Both Estrada and his lawyer Alan Paguia denied having anything to do with the rallies, which had a brief resurgence yesterday morning when around 20 persons calling themselves the "Puwersa ng Kababaihan" demonstrated in front of the Supreme Court building.

The demonstrators called on Davide and the other justices to step down and apologize to the people, saying they erred when they installed Ms Macapagal as President in January 2001.

When asked if they had a permit, a spokesperson of the group said they did not need one because their rally was "peaceful."

Police are also keeping a close watch on several Manila slum areas where Estrada maintains a substantial following.

The Macapagal administration appears keen to prevent a repeat of the 2001 Labor Day siege of Malacañang by Estrada supporters that descended into deadly street rioting and looting that claimed three lives.

'I did not stop them'

Estrada said that when he was President, he never lifted a finger to stop the series of rallies that eventually led to Edsa II in January 2001.

"During my time, I did not stop them," he said. "They were free to assemble. That's guaranteed in our Constitution: freedom of assembly, freedom of speech."

Estrada said the demonstrators were mounting the protest actions "on their own."

He theorized that they were protesting the justices' "culpable violation of the Constitution."

In a separate phone interview, Paguia admitted that the protest actions were fueling speculation that "there is connection between President Estrada" and the demonstrators.

But he said it would not be fair to attribute the "independent action of certain local leaders" to Estrada.

"These groups are a motley crowd," the lawyer said. "If there is a concerted effort [initiated by Estrada], the crowd could have been bigger. They're doing it on their own. President Estrada is a very popular President."

Paguia also denied that his motions before the Sandiganbayan to dismiss the plunder charge against his client and to forego presentation of evidence was aimed at taking the legal battle to the streets.

"We are not doing that," he declared. "Otherwise, we would not have filed the motion to dismiss ... and gone straight to the streets."

The People's Movement Against Poverty (PMAP) earlier warned the Macapagal administration that they would continue to hold more rallies until the justices heed their demands.

Two weeks ago, the PMAP also held a rally in front of the Supreme Court building to demand the resignation of the justices.

In a statement, PMAP Southern Tagalog leader Lope Santos said the justices had long lost the "moral ascendancy" to dispense justice.

He also said the poor had become poorer during Ms Macapagal's term.

Investigation

The Department of Justice is not taking the street protests sitting down.

Justice Undersecretary Merceditas Gutierrez said the National Bureau of Investigation would look into whether the demonstrators were violating the law.

When asked what charges would be brought against the Estrada supporters, Gutierrez said: "It would be up to their actions and statements."

"If they are inciting people to take up arms and rally against the government," then they are in trouble, she said.

Gutierrez said the DOJ would act on the results of the NBI investigation, which she said should be finished as soon as possible. *With reports from Philip C. Tubeza, Luige del Puerto, AFP*

Lightning rally mars Rizal Day rites

By Clarice Colting
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CALAMBA CITY—Truncheon-wielding police yesterday violently dispersed a rally and arrested 18 demonstrators minutes after President Macapagal-Arroyo delivered a speech to mark the 142nd birth anniversary of national hero Jose Rizal.

Protesting what they called "the true meaning of GMA's strong republic," the demonstrators led by members of Bayan-Southern Tagalog and students of the University of the Philippines-Los Baños were harshly pushed back by policemen two blocks from the city plaza where the Rizal Day rites were being held.

They took shelter in the garage of a private house and negotiated with around 40 members of the Calamba City Police Office and auxiliary forces from Laguna to allow them to pass.

"Your intention is for us to leave, and we are going to do that peacefully," said Bayan-ST spokesperson Jeffrey Ian Dy.

But the police, headed by a Superintendent Sta. Ana of the Laguna Provincial Police Office, insisted on hauling the demonstrators to the Calamba police station.

Three protesters were literally pulled along the ground and harshly shoved into the police vehicle.

Bembol de la Cruz, a member of the Nestlé-Cabuyao employees' union under the Pagkakaisa ng mga Manggagawa sa Timog Katagalugan, suffered an eye injury that was still bleeding as he and the others were held at the police station.

Other demonstrators incurred wounds and bruises.

Police said the protesters created a commotion during the Rizal Day program.

Ileto, 82: He said No to Marcos' Martial Law

From page A1

Lord that he died. He was so good, and God had provided everything for him for his goodness."

"Everything happened so fast," she said. "Only at 3 p.m. yesterday (Wednesday), he was listening to his collection of classical music."

Ileto, who founded the elite Army unit, the Scout Rangers, had been confined at the hospital from April 12 until Tuesday after doctors found water in his lungs. During his confinement, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer (stage 4). And last Saturday, he suffered a heart attack, Ms Dulce-Ileto said.

Yesterday, at about 4 a.m., Ileto was rushed back to the Heart Center from his Pacific Plaza residence in Pasig City after his nails started turning black, his wife said.

The Scout Rangers are widely acknowledged as Ileto's living legacy, but his defiance of Marcos is what many remember him for. "He was the only general who said no to martial law," said Ms Dulce-Ileto.

Defiance

In 1972, Ileto, then a brigadier general, was vice chief of staff of the Armed Forces and commanding general of the Philippine Defense Forces. As part of preparations for the declaration of martial law, Marcos shuffled some military commanders. Because of his opposition, Ileto was made deputy chief of staff. On the face of it a promotion, the transfer actually deprived Ileto of control of troops at a crucial time.

Eventually, his defiance prompted Marcos to appoint him ambassador to Iran and Turkey in a concurrent capacity, Ms Dulce-Ileto said, as a "diplomatic way of getting rid of him."

"HE was so good, and God had provided everything for him for his goodness," Ileto's widow Yrna Avelina L. Dulce-Ileto says of her husband at the Veterans Center in Camp Aguinaldo. EGAY MONTANA

Born on Oct. 24, 1920 in San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, Ileto entered the military through the Basic Reserved Officers Training Course he took while a BSME student at the University of the Philippines. He joined the Philippine Military Academy in 1940, but graduated from West Point, the US Military Academy, in 1943.

During World War II, he fought the Japanese with the US Army. Ileto was a young lieutenant from West Point when he joined the US Army's Alamo Scouts, whose exploits had been documented in the book "Silent Warriors" by Bruce Cedric.

Just last April, Ileto was honored as a "living hero" for his participation in the "Great Raid," during the commemoration in Cabanatuan City of the biggest-ever rescue of American prisoners of war. The daring raid on Jan. 30, 1945 liberated 516 American POWs. It was a joint operation of guerrillas headed by Captains Juan Pajota and Eduardo Joson, the US 6th Ranger Battalion under Lt. Col. Henry Mucci and the US Alamo Scouts, led by Ileto.

After the war, Ileto got out of the US Army, opting not to become a US citizen but to join the Philippine Army.

On Nov. 25, 1950, he organized the Scout Ranger Training Center in order to train mostly unattached volunteers from Battalion Combat Teams in reconnaissance and jungle warfare. He envisioned the new unit he established to perform dual functions--intelligence and combat. The term "Scout Ranger" comes from the combination of skills from two units: Alamo Scout tactics and 6th Ranger operational procedures.

Edsa role

Unknown to many, Ileto also played a role in the bloodless Edsa People Power Revolution that toppled Marcos in February 1986, according to Wilfredo Ileto, his second son by first wife Olga.

At that time, Ileto, then the ambassador to Thailand, acted as a liaison between the group of military officials loyal to Marcos, led by AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Fabian Ver, and the breakaway group led by AFP Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Fidel V. Ramos, "to prevent bloodshed."

"He didn't want any armed confrontation, and didn't want to be a fence-sitter either," the 55-year-old Wilfredo said. "Nobody knew that. He was a quiet man; he always wanted to keep a low profile."

Ileto was later named by Aquino as her defense secretary in 1986, replacing Juan Ponce Enrile who was suspected of plotting a coup d'etat.

He later served as national security adviser in the Aquino administration and presidential adviser on military affairs during the term of President Fidel Ramos.

In his long public career, he also served in Laos and Vietnam, where he worked closely with American military experts who were just beginning their counterinsurgency war. Upon his return to the Philippines, he served as director of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency.

Interment on June 22

Old age did not stop him from joining the ranks of retired generals in November 2001 who clamored for President Joseph Estrada to step down. At that time, he told the INQUIRER that Estrada should not wait for the result of the impeachment trial as his continued stay in power would plunge the country deeper into crisis.

Ileto is survived by Ms Dulce-Ileto and his stepdaughter, Michelle Diane Dulce; and seven children by his first wife, Olga: Reynaldo, Wilfredo, Christine, Jeffrey, Michelle, Marissa and Maria Teresa.

Ileto remarried in 1994 several years after his first wife, Olga, died.

Ileto will be buried with full military honors at the Libingan ng mga Bayani after the 9 a.m. Mass on Sunday, June 22.

Smoking now top . . .

From page A1

backs," finds some countries are making good progress in curtailing cigarette smoking.

Little success in RP

The same book, however, acknowledges that anti-smoking groups have had little success in getting past the political influence of tobacco companies in many countries, particularly the Philippines and Indonesia.

"Tobacco is a strong industry with strong political ties," said World Bank economist Joy de Beyer, who edited the book that was unveiled in San Francisco.

The book warns that as richer nations are slashing back on tobacco consumption amid government regulation, developing ones are feeling the brunt of "devastating health damage" caused by its use.

"Disease and illness are one of the highest factors in impoverishing people," De Beyer told reporters at a news conference.

More than 2.5 million people die each year in Third World countries—roughly the same number as in developed countries—from illnesses related to tobacco consumption, she said.

But the level of deaths is likely to rise to 7 million people a year within two decades, while tobacco-related deaths and illnesses will likely remain steady or decline in more developed societies, she said.

In addition, the study shows the negative effects of tobacco use on a country's economic development, making it imperative to reduce consumption.

The World Bank urged developing nations to counter the growing epidemic of tobacco-related illnesses with a strong mix of public education, higher cigarette taxes, tighter controls on advertising the products, and strict enforcement of the smoking ban in offices and public places.

Successful campaigns

Citing examples of successful anti-smoking campaigns in Brazil, Bangladesh, Poland, Thailand, Canada and South Africa, the study shows that sharp reductions in tobacco use can be achieved in just a few years.

In Poland, the number of adult males who smoked fell to 40 percent from 70 percent of the total population after anti-smoking efforts began in the late 1980s following the fall of communism.

The positive impact of higher taxes cannot be overemphasized, said Hu Teh-wei, professor of health economics at the University of California at Berkeley, near San Francisco.

It was the main factor in reducing the number of smokers to less than 20 percent of adults in California, Hu said.

"If China raised the tax just 40 cents (per pack), we could cut tobacco deaths by one to two million a year," he Hu.

Experience in a number of countries shows that higher prices are the prime disincentive to teenagers to smoke, De Beyer added.

Not easy

None of the anti-tobacco campaigns came about easy.

"Tobacco control is extremely difficult because there are these huge vested economic interests . . . The tobacco industry is very good at reaching into politicians, very high-level politicians," said De Beyer.

According to the book, anti-smoking campaigners in Poland were confronted with a $100 million-a-year promotion campaign by cigarette producers.

In South Africa, the Rembrandt tobacco group, which held a virtual monopoly on the market, used intimate links with government policy makers and the mass media to fight anti-smoking campaigns.

In Bangladesh, tobacco companies that were forbidden to pitch their products to youths were nevertheless allowed to sponsor rock concerts to promote smoking.

And in Thailand, US cigarette manufacturers tried to use American trade policy to force Thailand to open the market to them in 1989 just as anti-smoking campaigners organized against the local tobacco monopoly. *AFP/Reuters*

Doubts raised over arrest of 5 young Indons

From page A1

they were linked to the regional terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah.

Barahama is pure Indonesian. The fathers of Pareda and Panggilawans are Indonesian and their mothers, Filipino.

The five were all born in the Philippines and are blood relatives, according to The Associated Press.

"We will work with the Indonesian government to trace the underground contacts of these suspects ... and get a clear picture of the transnational web of conspiracy," President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday in a speech marking the birthday of national hero Jose Rizal.

In a statement, she commended the police "for a job well done," Agence France Presse said.

AP quoted Gen. Narciso Abaya, Armed Forces chief of staff, as saying that the testimony of the five men indicated links to "a foreign terrorist organization."

He said one of the five told police interrogators that the others had trained at Camp Abubakar, the former stronghold of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front that was captured by the government in 2000.

But Chief Supt. Arturo Lomibao, police intelligence director, told AP that it was premature to link the suspects to foreign terrorists.

"As of now, we have nothing yet," he said, adding that the military might have other sources.

Lomibao also said the only evidence so far was the improvised bomb, which resembled explosives retrieved from Camp Abubakar.

Job recruiter

Councilor Leyson, however, said there was a growing impression among residents here that the arrest could be an effort of the police to extricate a ranking police officer from the illegal gambling controversy.

He said he had been receiving persistent reports that the proliferation of illegal gambling in the city and nearby areas had the blessing of the police official.

Police had said that a civilian informer tipped them off on a supposed bomber from Maguindanao province heading to either General Santos or Tacurong Cities.

But relatives of the five men said this was a mere concoction.

Mensi Panggilawan told reporters that an unknown job recruiter carrying a bag picked up her five nephews at around 11 a.m. on Tuesday.

By her account, the five were taken to the Bulaong public terminal. When they alighted from the vehicle, the recruiter ushered them inside an eatery where the job interview was supposed to take place.

The recruiter ordered lunch, told the five to eat and said he was going to the toilet. He left the bag behind.

Suddenly, three policemen entered the eatery and ordered the five to drop to the floor.

The policemen picked up the the bag, opened it, and found an explosive device.

Charlie Panggilawan, who said he was with the five, managed to escape and headed straight home to Purok Balunto in Barangay Labangal to inform family members of the arrest.

Alejandro Panggilawan, elder brother of Allan, told Bombo Radyo that his brother and four cousins were innocent.

Jane Wati, waitress at the eatery, confirmed that the man who accompanied the five was the one who brought the bag.

"He disappeared as the police came in," she said.

Soldier with grenade

In Cotabato City, angry residents assailed police for failing to arrest a soldier who was caught with a hand grenade at a crowded college campus on Sunday.

Sr. Insp. Roger Legaspi, chief of the city's police substation No. 2 in Barangay Rosary Heights III, admitted that his men had not arrested Sgt. Delfin Simon.

Legaspi also admitted that authorities had not tried to determine Simon's motive in bringing a grenade to a motocross competition being held at the Cotabato City State Polytechnic College. The competition was part of the city's celebration of its 44th founding anniversary.

The residents inundated a local station with phone calls to denounce the police's handling of the case.

They pointed out that only the grenade was seized and "submitted as evidence" to the city prosecutor's office.

Legaspi said he would reprimand the policemen on duty who, he noted, did not log the case at the nearest precinct.

He said he had asked investigators to trace Simon's whereabouts by coordinating with the soldier's superiors at the 6th Infantry Division. ***With reports from Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau; AP; AFP***

Arrested Egyptian an illegal recruiter

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE EGYPTIAN national who was with confessed bomber Muklis (or Saifullah) Yunos when he was arrested in Cagayan de Oro on May 25 is an illegal recruiter, not a terrorist.

This is the result of the weeks-long police investigation on the possible links of Egyptian Mahmud al-Gabri with terrorist networks, the INQUIRER learned yesterday.

Al-Gabri, who was arrested for trying to slip Yunos on a flight to Manila, is also not the Egyptian terrorist that authorities thought him to be, according to a ranking intelligence official.

"He's not the guy we were looking for," the source told the INQUIRER.

The Egyptian on the Philippine National Police's watch list was allegedly involved in the bombing of the destroyer USS Cole in Yemen on Oct. 12, 2000. A rubber boat loaded with explosives rammed into the destroyer, killing 17 sailors and injuring at least 35 other people.

The intelligence officer said Al-Gabri and the suspect in the Yemen attack merely had the same name.

"[Al-Gabri] could not have been present during the attack because he was jailed in Davao for illegal recruitment at that time," the source said.

The source also said that Al-Gabri and Yunos met just as the latter was planning to "lie low."

Yunos was "seeking the help of the Egyptian to facilitate his travel abroad," the source said.

At that time, Yunos was being hunted by authorities in connection with the Rizal Day bombings on Dec. 30, 2000.

Yunos admitted complicity Wednesday at the Department of Justice preliminary investigation into the bombing of a Light Rail Transit station in Manila on that day.

It took the PNP Intelligence Group nearly a month to establish Al-Gabri's identity.

The Egyptian, an illegal alien, remains detained in Camp Crame pending his deportation.

Ex-rebels are DSWD's new wards

From page A1

the government.

Enter the DSWD. Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Eduardo Ermita said yesterday the DSWD was now being tapped to apply its expertise and extensive network in the organizing, training and monitoring of ex-rebels who operate cooperatives and other small ventures.

Following the signing of an agreement yesterday, Ermita formally turned over to Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman the livelihood component of the rebel returnee program.

The retired general admitted that lack of personnel had made it difficult for the National Reintegration Coordinating Office in overseeing the mostly farming "co-ops" run by ex-rebels.

Of the 525 such co-ops launched since 1994, only 60 percent remain in existence while the "rest have turned belly-up due to poor management," said the NRCO Executive Director Sergio Belleza, a retired general.

"It's not easy to turn a rebel comrade into a manager overnight," Belleza conceded. "That's where the DSWD comes in."

Ermita said the DSWD's track record in helping recipients of livelihood assistance pursue a "profitable and sustainable" enterprise should be a new "come-on" for the remaining rebels to give up arms and return to mainstream society.

The DSWD, he stressed, has "people on the ground" to better guide the leaders of the cooperatives.

Return on investment

Soliman said her agency's Self-Employment Assistance-Kaunlaran Program (SEA-K) had so far reached an "85-percent" success rate, as measured by the number of livelihood projects that posted returns on investment.

Asked if she thought her background as an activist might help convince rebels, particularly communist insurgents, to come down from the hills, she merely smiled.

"I've only worked aboveground but I've worked a lot with the underground people and ... a number of them were my classmates in UP," she said. "Maybe it will just make the communication (between the DSWD and ex-rebels) much easier."

CAN-DO Dinky Soliman just goes about doing the doable.

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

The SEA-K program involves organizing the beneficiaries into 25- to 30-member community-based credit organizations, she explained.

Aside from receiving financial support and technical training, the members are made to undergo what Soliman calls "trust-building" sessions, especially if they come from different backgrounds and are working together for the first time.

She expects this trust-building process to be of crucial use in organizing ex-rebels.

Belleza cited another reason the livelihood component of the rebel returnee program had not proved that successful, particularly in the case of New People's Army surrenderees.

Many ex-NPAs, after securing livelihood aid, prefer to "live incognito because they feel they are still being hunted down," he said.

Financial package

According to Ermita, returnees either from the Moro separatist groups or the NPA are entitled to P12,500 each for them to use in starting a small business.

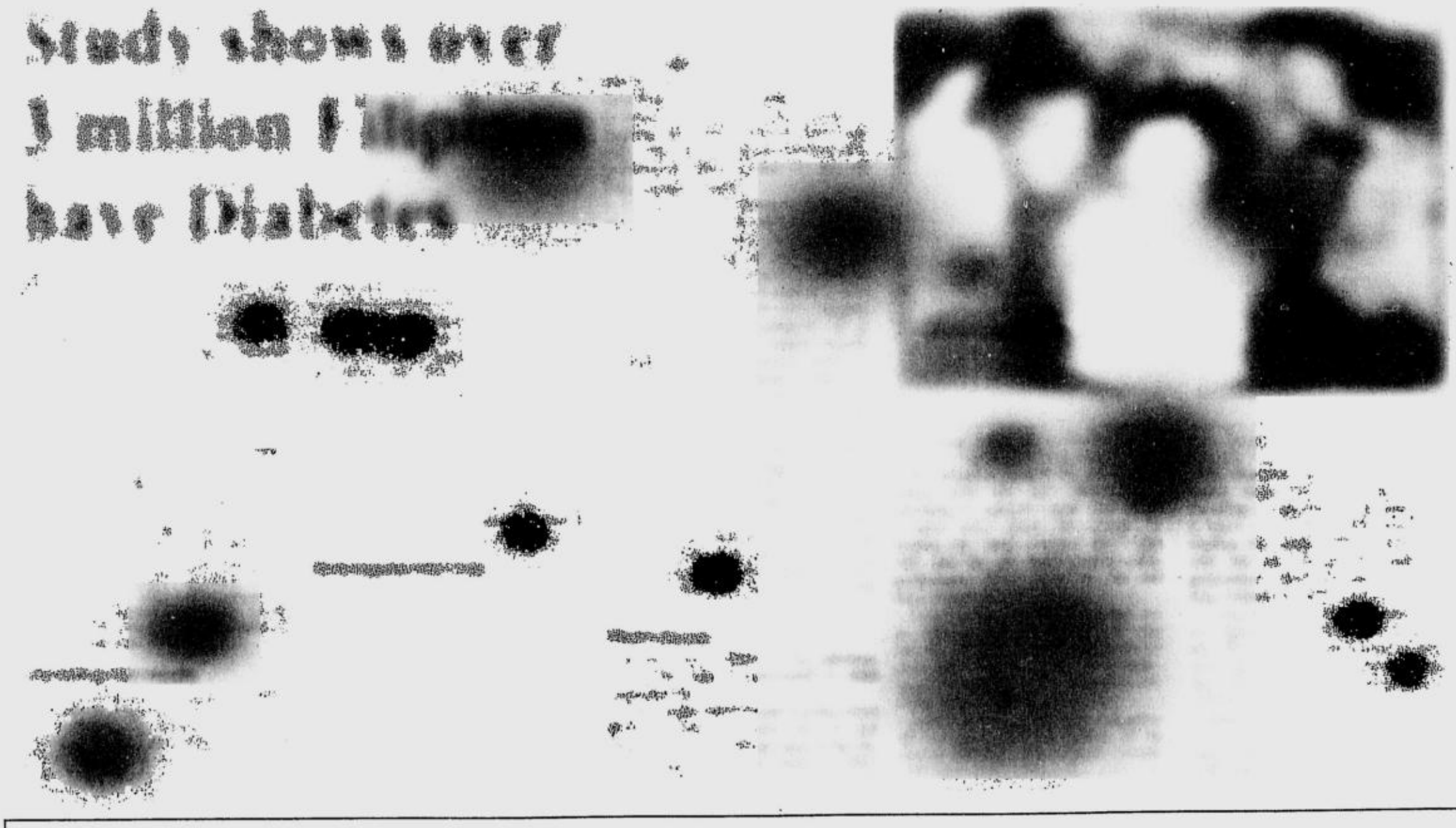
Before getting the livelihood package, they are also given emergency assistance for their more immediate needs at P2,500 each.

Ermita and Soliman reported, however, that starting last year rebel returnees had been getting an additional P2,000 each from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, plus a PhilHealth medical insurance card.

Under the Balik-Baril program, the ex-rebels are also paid according to the firearms they yield.

Ermita disclosed the price list as follows: P30,000 for a mortar and light machine gun, P18,000 for an M16 rifle, P15,000 to P20,000 for a grenade launcher, and P8,000 to P200 for a sidearm, from .45s to "paltik" pistols.

Belleza said that since 1994, about 39,000 rebels had surrendered and availed themselves of financial packages now totaling P365.7 million. The livelihood and emergency packages started at P8,000 and P1,750, respectively, in 1994. The current rates were adopted only in November 2001.



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Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

COP CHIEF'S REPORT

No drug-free barangay in QC

By Alcuin Papa

THERE is no drug-free barangay in Quezon City.

This was revealed yesterday by the Central Police District in connection with the government's crackdown on illegal drugs and the deadline given by President Macapagal-Arroyo to the Philippine National Police to wipe out drug syndicates in the country in three months.

"To be honest about it, there is no barangay that is drug-free. That's the case in any city in Metro Manila. Because when we say drug-free, that means there is not a single resident using drugs," Chief Supt. Napoleon Castro, CPD director, told the INQUIRER.

But he quickly added that the drug situation in Quezon City was "manageable."

"Although there is a clear need to refocus our drug campaign, the problem would not worsen," Castro added.

Part of this refocus, he explained, is the emphasis to be given to four barangays in the city. These are Barangays Batasan Hills, Holy Spirit, Culiat and Tatalon.

Castro said he has targeted these areas because based on reports from his men in the field, there are a high number of shabu users in these four barangays. "When there are a lot of users, there are a lot of pushers."

However, Castro said this does not mean they would relax their surveillance efforts in other areas.

Castro also revealed that he is working closely with barangay officials and civic organizations in a bid to pinpoint and arrest dealers of illegal drugs in the area.

Quezon City police face an uphill drive against the sale and proliferation of illegal drugs, particularly shabu.

Just the other day, eight suspected drug pushers were arrested in separate operations in Quezon City.

Last April, anti-narcotics agents of the Quezon City police force arrested six suspects plying their illegal trade right in the heart of Cubao's busy commercial area.

In recent months, shabu laboratories were also discovered in two posh villages in Quezon City, one in New Manila and another in Loyola Heights.

Shabu and raw materials for making the drugs that were confiscated in the two raids ran into billions of pesos.

The CPD is also closely watching the swanky Libis and Timog areas after they received reports that Ecstasy was freely being sold inside bars in the two areas.

Ecstasy pills, worth between P1,000 and P5,000, have been hailed as the new party drug

It appeals to rich club patrons because of its psychedelic effects and apparently enables party-goers to stay awake all night.

2 Manila areas watched

THE WESTERN Police District is closely watching two areas in Manila for drug-related activities.

WPD head Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong named the areas as Tondo and Quiapo.

"It appears there is a concentration of drug users in these two areas," Bulaong said in a phone interview.

Tondo and Quiapo are considered to be the most populous districts in the city.

Bulaong said the monitoring is part of the intensified government drive against illegal drugs.

Bulaong said they are not targeting any specific ethnic or religious group in their anti-drug campaign.

Datu Amirol Ambiong, head of the Metro Manila Muslims' Peace and Coordinating Council, welcomed the latest police move.

"If Gen. Bulaong can clean up the Muslim side of Quiapo from users and pushers, we will be very happy," Ambiong said in a telephone interview. *Luige del Puerto*

BIG CATCH JOAN BONDOC

A total of 73 suspected drug users and pushers who have been arrested by members of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency are presented to the media during a press conference held yesterday in Camp Crame, Quezon City. The crackdown is part of the government's intensified drive against illegal drugs.

Confusion, fraud raps mar UP polls

THREE days into the canvassing of votes for 23 board positions of the University of the Philippines Alumni Association (UPAA), the winners have yet to be declared.

But a press statement issued yesterday by the Group 21 party led by former Regent and Assistant Minister of Agriculture Nelia Gonzalez claimed that the group has won the elections, leading the opposition by as much as 2,000 votes.

The other party led by Domingo Santiago, mostly from the Upsilon fraternity which has long dominated the UPAA, had filed a petition last Saturday to move the canvassing to a later date claiming electoral fraud.

According to Santiago's group, two envelopes containing 4,500 names of voters should be disregarded and declared invalid.

The group claimed the documents accompanying the names in the two envelopes did not have proper authorization and application forms.

But Quezon City Regional Trial Court Judge Rogelio Pizarro ruled that 1,500 people whose names were in the two envelopes could vote after they had been verified.

The Commission on Elections chaired by UP professor Victor Avecilla had earlier denied the petition of Santiago's group to defer the canvassing of votes.

But because of the court's ruling, both parties agreed to proceed with the canvassing last Monday.

They agreed, however, not to proclaim any winner or winners if it appeared that the number of ballots corresponding to the remaining names from the two envelopes, would materially affect the final result of the election.

More than 17,000 ballots were canvassed last Monday. But on Wednesday, the Comelec called for a conference between the two parties to discuss fraud charges lodged by Upsilon against the other party. Group 21, however, refused to attend the meeting.

Georgina Encanto, a member of Gonzalez' group, said that if the other group has complaints, they should file their complaints within five days after the proclamation as stated in the rules.

"Their allegations should not affect when the winners should be proclaimed," said Encanto.

She added that they were leading the polls in six out of 10 precincts.

Avecilla said the Comelec was still weighing the validity of Santigo's accusations. *Amy Remo*

7,000 settlers assured of 'humane' site

By Tina Santos

THE NATIONAL Housing Authority yesterday assured more than 7,000 families from Malabon and Valenzuela, who would be displaced by the government's Metro-Clark railway project, of a safe and humane relocation site.

Edardo Pamintuan, NHA general manager, said in a statement that the relocation of the affected families—3,331 from Malabon and 3855 from Valenzuela—is now ongoing, citing the urgent need to finish Phase 1 of the resettlement program.

Pamintuan said the project proponent for Northrail, the North Luzon Railways Corp. (NLRC), has requested the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council to deliver a Philippine National Railways (PNR) right-of-way on time as ordered by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"NLRC has adjusted its project implementation and defined a more aggressive timetable for the relocation program in order to provide as much time as possible for the resettlement activities," Pamintuan said.

He added that under its timetable, NHA has to clear Malabon PNR right-of-way by end of July and Valenzuela by September.

Talent manager held for non-existent jobs

By Leila B. Salaverria

EIGHTY-TWO persons yesterday filed complaints of estafa and illegal recruitment against Harleta B. Velasco, general manager of Harvel International Talent Management and Promotion Agency in Makati.

Police arrested Velasco on Wednesday after she was accused of running off with millions of pesos she had collected from the complainants for what turned out to be non-existent jobs in Japan.

Police also learned that Harvel International had not been licensed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

SPO2 Rodolfo Octaviano said they were expecting more complainants to come forward.

Police said Velasco and Mel Acena, another officer of the promotion agency, had promised to give the victims jobs in Japan with a salary of $1,400 a month, in exchange for a fee.

The victims said they had been asked to submit the pertinent documents and then shell out between P20,000 to P100,000.

The first batch of workers were supposed to fly to Japan earlier this year, but the trip had been postponed to June 16.

When the trip was again postponed, the victims met with Velasco. This time, they were no longer satisfied with her explanation and had asked authorities to arrest her.

One of the victims, a waiter at the Saisaki Restaurant in Glorietta mall, said he was referred to Velasco's agency by a Japanese who frequented the restaurant.

Speaking with several complainants who went to see her at the Makati detention cell, Velasco said she was not responsible for the delay in their trips. She blamed one of her relatives as the one who had been in charge of the bookings in Japan.

They didn't get to enjoy their swim

By Tarra Quismundo

THEIR only playground claimed their lives.

Angelica Igana, 6, and her 4-year-old brother Jaime, told their parents they were just going to play and swim in the Malabon-Navotas River at around 2 p.m. last Wednesday.

They had time to kill, since they don't go to school.

It's where they may have usually played, as the river is just below their shanty. They lived under the Malabon-Navotas Bridge, along Estrella Street, Tañong, Malabon, police said.

But the siblings never returned. Their bodies were retrieved by their neighbors an hour later, not far from where they were last seen alive.

Police said their neighbors had to dive into the deep and murky river before the children were found. Angela was found first.

Police said the victims' parents knew that their children did not know how to swim.

The victims' father is a fish vendor, while their mother is a housewife, according to police.

Cabbie got more than just fare

By Leila B. Salaverria

TAXI driver Danilo Castro got more than cab fare when he took a male passenger in Makati on Tuesday night.

A hand grenade was left in the back seat of Castro's cab when another man attacked his passenger.

Castro told Makati police that the passenger had hailed him at 1:30 a.m. on Tuesday along Kalayaan Avenue. They had only driven for a few meters in the pouring rain when Castro's taxi stalled. The passenger got anxious and asked Castro to move on, but the cab would not start.

A car that could be a Toyota then blocked the path of Castro's stalled cab. A man got off from the car, opened the passenger side door and tried to attack Castro's passenger.

But the passenger was able to run away, with the assailant pursuing him.

Castro then drove home to Quezon City. He noticed later the hand grenade at the back seat of his taxi.

QUEST FOR JUSTICE

Members of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and friends and relatives hold a rally in front of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City on Thursday as part of their continuing quest for justice for slain human rights activists Eduardo Gumanoy and Eden Marcellana. JOAN BONDOC

METROBRIEFS

Killed in Caloocan

A PISTOL stopped Lito Alcovindras from testifying in court yesterday. Alcovindras, 46, a native of Masbate and resident of Gumamela Street, was on his way to the Caloocan Regional Trial Court when an unidentified suspect shot him several times along Jasmin Street. Police did not reveal the case for which Alcovindras was supposed to testify. The suspect escaped on board a tricycle. *Tarra Quismundo*

Meter robbers

RIZAL provincial police yesterday appealed to the public for any information that could lead to the arrest of members of the "Electric Meter Gang" who were allegedly responsible for electric meter robberies in Taytay and Antipolo City. Police said that on Wednesday morning alone, 11 electric meter bases were stolen in Sitio Dalig Uno, Barangay Dalig, Antipolo City by the suspects. Police said the stolen meters were taken mostly from uninhabited houses. *Nelson Flores*

Killed in Pasig

RIDING his motorcycle without a safety helmet proved fatal to Joan Sandaga Ogacho, 24, of Caniogan, Pasig City. He was killed last Wednesday in a collision with a gravel and sand government truck driven by Isaiah Valdesco. Another motorist, Edel Alexis Bernardo, 21, was also injured in the incident, when the Honda Civic he was driving was also hit by the truck. The truck went wayward after the brake malfunctioned, police said. Valdesco surrendered to police after the incident. *Nelson Flores*

Caught in Pasay

A TEENAGE boy was caught stealing a wristwatch inside a room in Romulo Callan's house in Kalayaan Village, Pasay City, at dawn yesterday. Police said the 16-year-old suspect also pointed to two companions who served as lookouts. Callan told police he caught the first suspect inside his son's room in possession of his son's watch worth P3,500. At the police station, another robbery victim came and identified the suspect and his two companions as the ones who robbed her a cell phone and watches worth around P38,000 in all. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Nabbed in Tondo

EFFREN Dy, 39, would pose as a cop and rob taxi drivers. Police said Dy used a fan knife and a fake police badge to intimidate his victims. On Wednesday night, Dy flagged down Albert Cabog's MGE taxi along Tayuman Street in Tondo and announced the heist immediately after. Dy took Cabog's P500. But a group of real policemen were on patrol and arrested Dy. *Luigi Del Puerto*

Alpha fellowship

THE ALPHA Phi Beta Chancery will hold its monthly fellowship meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. today at Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan. The fellowship will follow the meeting of the Chancery's board of directors and officers at 4:30 p.m.

2 lawmen held for extortion

By Luige del Puerto

A WESTERN Police District police officer and a Metro Manila Development Authority traffic enforcer have been arrested allegedly for extorting money from drivers.

On Wednesday, PO2 Ruben Cosme was caught receiving P1,000 in marked money from tricycle drivers Romeo Crencia, 28, and Romeo Lalusa, 37, at the WPD Traffic branch in Port Area, Manila.

The drivers had sought the help of Manila policemen, who laid a trap for Cosme.

Yesterday, MMDA enforcer Alfredo Isla, 44, was caught on video extorting P100 from a police informer in Manila.

Police said Isla flagged down victim Romy Tan on Reina Regente Street in Binondo and accused him of violating the number coding traffic law.

Tan then called SPO2 Fernando Cantillas, who set up video equipment to record the extortion.

Cantillas captured on video the traffic enforcer receiving P100.

NATIONAL Police Chief Hermogenes E. Ebdane, Jr. studies the high-powered firearms that have been seized from suspected robbers and kidnappers. JOAN BONDOC

Ebdane backs CIDG raid on Ping's brod

By Christian Esguerra and Juliet Labog-Javellana

PHILIPPINE National Police chief Hermogenes Ebdane yesterday stood by his men and maintained that they only acted based on strong evidence which they gathered against Senator Panfilo Lacson's brother.

"We move by evidence," Ebdane said in a press conference.

He said that the information and data his men have gathered against Lacson's brother, Romulo, have been checked and verified.

Ebdane said he had instructed the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group to determine why the security agency had explosives in its premises.

"In all indications, (the explosives) are not for the good but for the destruction of humanity," he told reporters.

CIDG chief Eduardo Matillano, a known nemesis of Lacson, had anything but sweet words for the senator.

"There's no need to destroy (Lacson) anymore," Matillano said on Wednesday. "He has destroyed himself already. I'm just doing my job."

The police official denied that he had linked Lacson's brother to the explosives that were seized in the security agency.

"(Lacson is) the one who admitted that the security agency was owned by his brother," Matillano told the INQUIRER yesterday. "I never said that. Is (Lacson) guilty?"

Matillano said he would also summon a certain Ricky Lacson for questioning.

Based on documents the CIDG obtained, the name Ricky Lacson—not Romulo or Ramon Lacson—was the one that appeared in the list of officers of Golden Beret Security and Allied Services, Inc., Matillano said.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye yesterday also said that the police search of the security agency in Parañaque City was not politically-motivated, as claimed by the opposition.

"It was a raid conducted in compliance with an arrest warrant that was issued by the appropriate judicial authorities," Bunye said. "And according to the raiders some evidence of explosives were found within the vicinity."

Bunye said that members of the CIDG unit followed procedures.

"We're saying that nobody is exempt from the purview of the law as far as searches and seizures are concerned," Bunye said. "It's just incidental that the businessman is related to a powerful politician."

Bunye also said that it was up to military intelligence chief Victor Corpus to divulge the identity of the "national political figure" whom he referred to as being investigated for links with drug syndicates.

Formal raps filed vs NBI official

By Luige del Puerto

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation on Wednesday formally filed bribery and graft charges before the Ombudsman against Dr. Maximo Reyes, the NBI's chief medico-legal officer who was caught last week allegedly extorting P200,000 from a doctor.

Reyes has been charged with violation of Article 210 (direct bribery) of the Revised Penal Code and RA 3019, or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, according to Mariano Panganiban, head of the NBI's Special Task Force.

The NBI also filed the same charges against Dr. Anthony Bernal Castro, a medico-legal officer of NBI-Pangasinan, and Dr. Jeremy Rosario, a physician of the Don Amadeo Perez Sr. Memorial Hospital in Urdaneta, Pangasinan.

Castro and Rosario allegedly acted as Reyes' cohorts in the bribery incident, the NBI said.

Reyes has denied the accusations, but has refused to comment on the case.

"I don't want to comment because what is at stake here is my credibility," Reyes told the INQUIRER. "I will just face Dr. (Lenette) Chan (the complainant) in court."

Panganiban also defended the NBI against accusations that the agency was slow in filing charges against its own officials.

"It's not true we are slow (in filing the case)," Panganiban said. "Along with several other documents, we had to wait for the request form for the marked money (used in the entrapment operation)."

He said it was the Dagupan Police, not the NBI, which prepared the marked money.

Pangiban said they have "an airtight case" against Reyes.

Among the documents the NBI had submitted to the Ombudsman was an autopsy report supposedly exonerating Chan.

The autopsy report had Reyes' signature, which meant he had already approved it.

Panganiban said the document confirmed the bribery charge against Reyes and the other two doctors.

The NBI also submitted photos of several text messages Rosario had allegedly sent to Chan.

The text messages hinted of bribery, NBI officials said.

The bribery charge stemmed from a medical malpractice suit filed against Chan.

Last March, Chan had operated on a pregnant woman who died six days after the operation, the NBI said.

The woman's husband asked the NBI-Pangasinan to look into his wife's case.

The NBI said Reyes demanded P200,000 from Chan in exchange for a favorable autopsy report.

Chan then sought the help of the Intelligence Service of Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) and the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Reaction (Pacer) team.

Isapf head Gen. Victor Corpus referred Chan's case to the NBI, which formed a team to entrap Reyes.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco sacked Reyes from his post last Saturday.

Animal rights group slams fastfood chain for cruelty

By Margaux Ortiz

MEMBERS of a United States-based animal rights group have brought their cause to the Philippines and started to stage protests to denounce a fastfood chain for alleged inhumane treatment of chickens.

About 30 members of the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) yesterday picketed the KFC Philippines branch in Harrison Plaza, Manila, holding up signs that read, "KFC Tortures Chickens."

Three other animal rights activists even locked themselves up in a cramped cage.

"We're not asking for amazing things, we're just asking that KFC monitor slaughterhouses to ensure that the animals are killed humanely," Jason Baker told reporters as he crouched uncomfortably inside the cage. "If (KFC) can't even do that . . . then that shows that KFC should not be supported in any way."

Baker, Peta representative for the Asia Pacific region, has accused the fastfood establishment of refusing to upgrade animal welfare standards.

Baker said that the protest is part of an international campaign to pressure KFC to upgrade its standards.

Baker said Peta, an international animal rights organization, started the campaign six months ago after two years of negotiations with KFC. He added that hundreds of demonstrations are being staged everyday in Asia, US and Europe.

Baker said that they are calling on KFC to ensure that the chickens are transported and killed humanely.

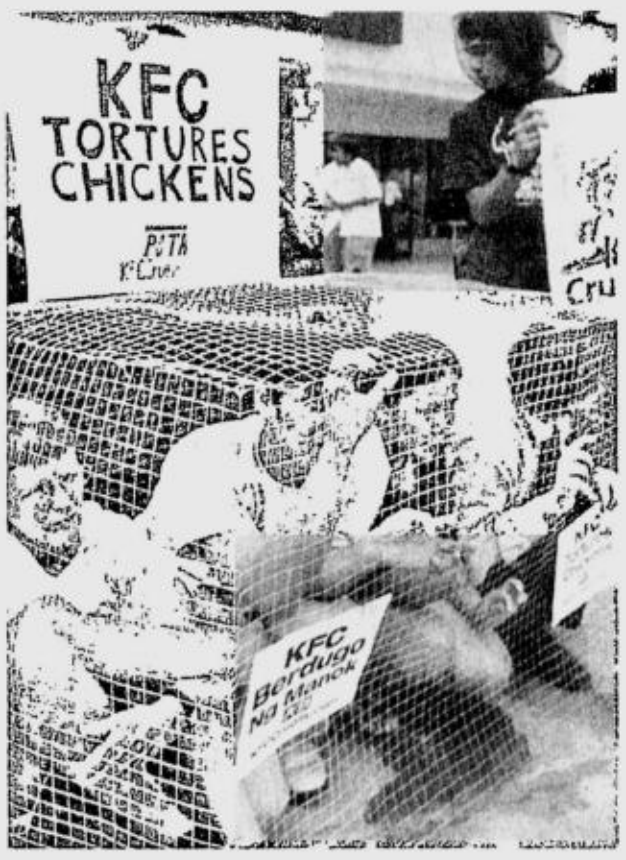
"The chickens should be raised in conditions wherein they can spread their wings and have interesting food to eat," Baker said.

He added that the animals continue to live a "life of hell in cages," literally dying from stress and boredom.

Peta Director Bruce Friedrich said in a statement that in their book, KFC stands for cruelty. He added that other international food chains have all responded to consumer pressure to reduce the cruel treatment of animals raised and slaughtered for food.

"KFC, on the other hand, continues to drug and breed animals to grow so quickly that they are crippled by their own weight and suffer from heart failure and lung collapse," Friedrich said.

He added that Peta wants KFC to replace the crude and ineffective means of killing animals, like electric stunning and throat-slitting, with gas killing.



ANIMAL rights activists lock themselves in a cage to dramatize the plight of chickens in the country during a protest rally in front of the KFC branch in Harrison Plaza, Manila. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

KFC: No inhumane treatment

AN OFFICIAL of KFC Philippines yesterday denied the charge of inhumane treatment an animal rights group leveled against the fastfood chain, saying that the food products arrive at their doorstep ready for cooking.

According to Cha Cha Juinio, KFC Philippines vice president for marketing, their company does not have a hand in the killing of chickens.

Juinio said that KFC, the same with other fastfood chains, buys its chickens from the country's chicken integrators.

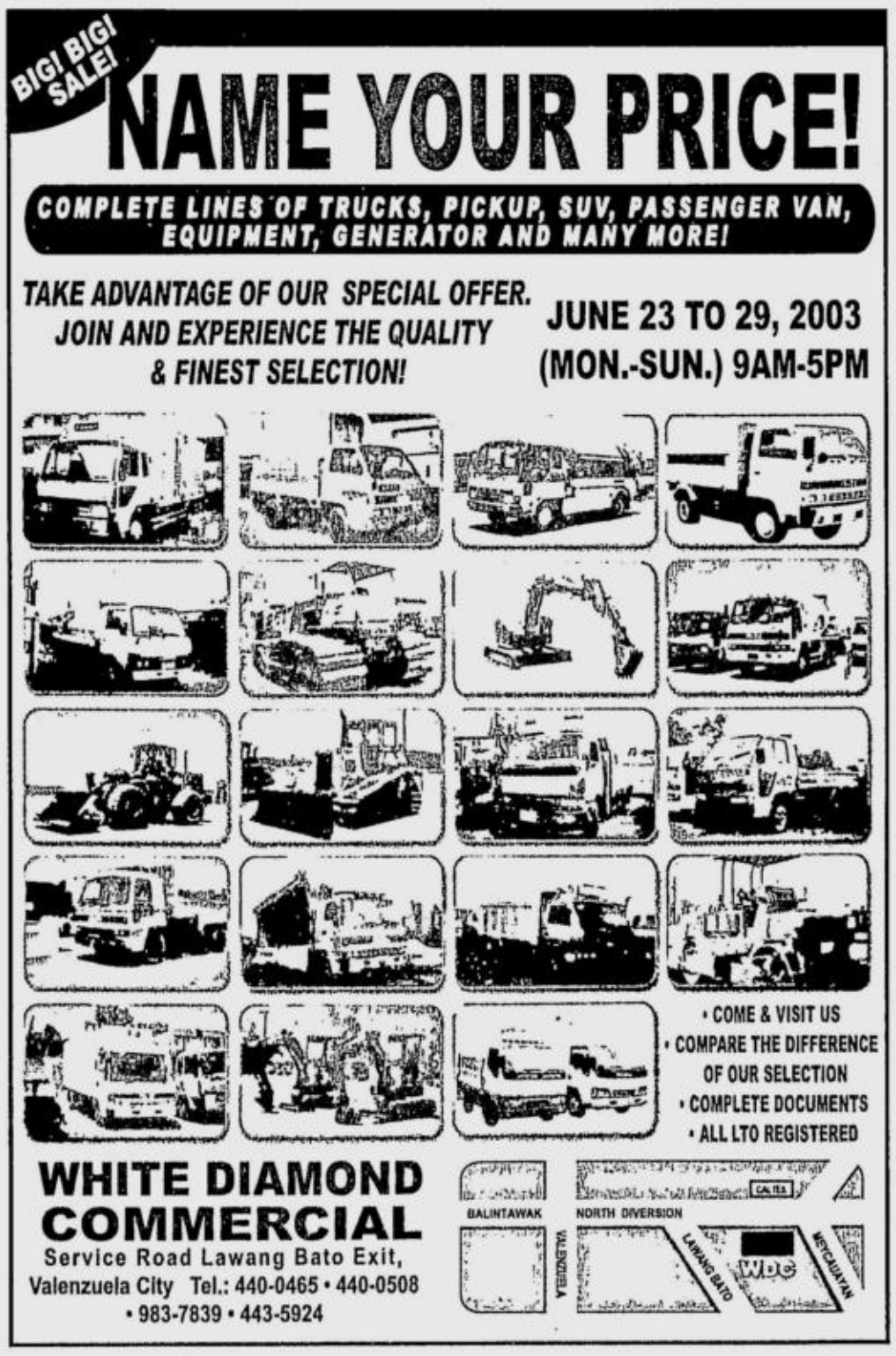
"We buy our chickens from San Miguel and Purefoods," Juinio told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. "The method for slaughter is the same whether you buy the chickens from the supermarkets or the wet markets."

She added that the group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) originally staged protests in the United States and brought the issue to the Philippines only recently.

Juinio said that Peta targetted KFC in the US because it is the only identified chicken restaurant.

"Don't single (KFC) out," Juinio stressed. "We're not even the biggest chicken users in the country."

Margaux Ortiz



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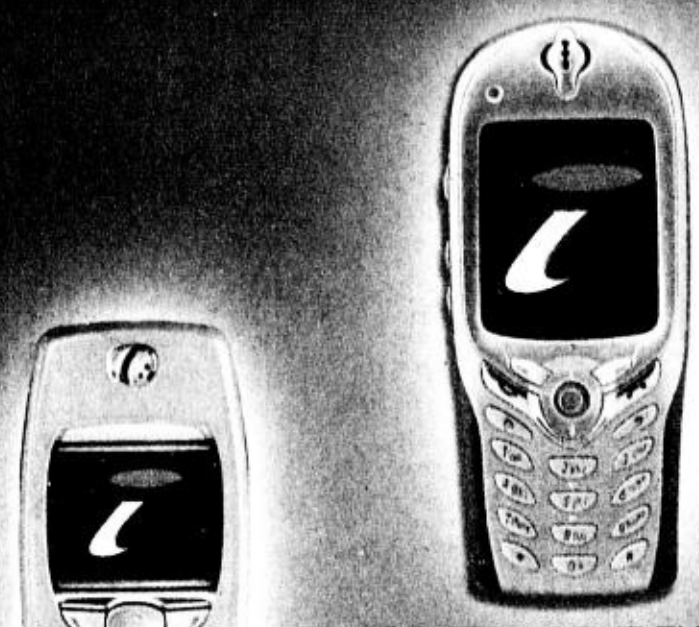

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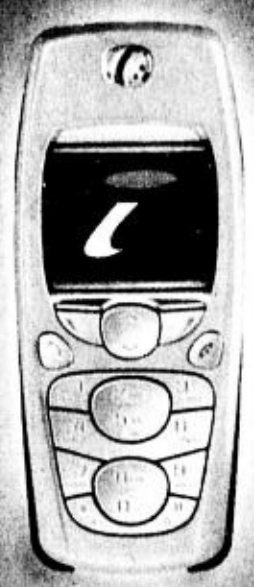

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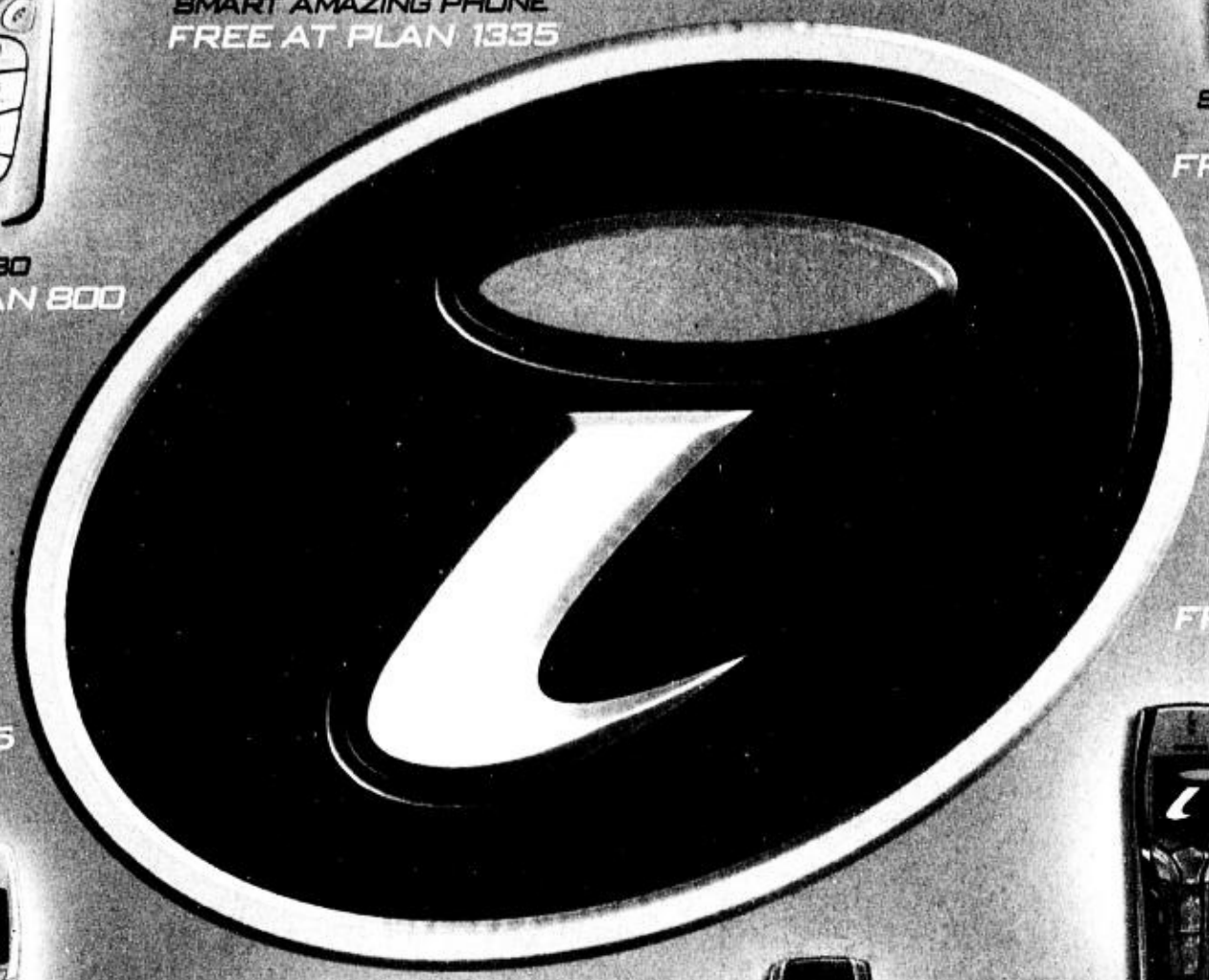

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Assistant Editor Edwin M. Villanueva

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■ Spurs celebrate in barge parade /A29

TEAM owner Cecilio de Pedro and coach Junel Baculi celebrate with Hapee players and supporters after last night's thriller. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Hapee cops crown

By Dennis U. Eroa

Hapee Toothpaste, thanks to Gerard Jones' pointblank miss in the final four seconds, edged Viva Mineral Water, 64-62, yesterday to win the Sunkist PBL Unity Cup championship at the jampacked Pasig Sports Center.

Trailing 62-63, the 6-foot-4 Jones had a chance to complete Viva's magical run after finding himself with a good view of the basket, but his shot rimmed out and Hapee escaped with the thriller of a win in their rubber match.

Wesley Gonzales split his charities with 1.9 seconds left to complete scoring in the exciting series that reached the limit of five games because of Viva's gutsy stand.

"This victory showed the true character of the team," said Hapee mentor Junel Baculi, who jacked up his PBL titles to six.

It was the first title since the 1996 Reinforced Conference for the Lamoiyan franchise which got swept by Welcoat Paints in the Challenge Cup best-of-five series at the start of the year.

Peter June Simon took up the scoring chore from Allan Salangsang but it was the monster rebounding and shotblocking skills of Rich Alvarez and the foxy plays of Eugene Tan which spelled the difference for Hapee.

Simon erupted for 22 points as he prevented the Water Force from ripping the game wide open in the third period. The 6-foot-4 Alvarez silenced the roaring Viva crowd with his 14-rebound, 4-shot block performance, while Tan, who survived foul trouble at the start of the pivotal fourth period, contributed eight points, four rebounds and six assists.

Tan, a veteran of five PBL Finals, gave the Sparklers a 63-62 lead with a daring layup off the smaller Warren Ybañez.

Scores:

HAPEE 64—Simon 22, Tan 8, Mercado 8, Gonzales 7, Alvarez 6, Benedicto 5, Salangsang 4, Dualan 2, Gelig 2, Dy 0.

VIVA 62—Misolas, 15, Co 11, Catli 11, Jones 7, Ybañez 7, Miranda 6, Margate 5, Zablan 0, Isip 0, Sinco 0, Yabut 0.

Quarters: 13-18, 32-35, 55-51, 64-62

Our apologies

WE would like to apologize to PSC commissioner Mike Barredo for some inaccuracies in our story on June 18 regarding the sexual harassment case filed against him by a janitress last week in Baguio City.

Our reporter Marc Anthony Reyes admitted that the paragraph stating "the commissioner then made his move, locked the door, caught her in a tight embrace and started caressing her against her will" were facts not in the complaint sheet.

The reporter said that while he was able to read the complaint, he couldn't fully remember what was in the charge sheet.

He admitted it was a lapse in judgment that he tried to recall, word for word, the contents of the charge sheet when the best thing to do was not to write about it since he wasn't sure of his facts.

We assure Mr. Barredo that the error was committed inadvertently and without malice.

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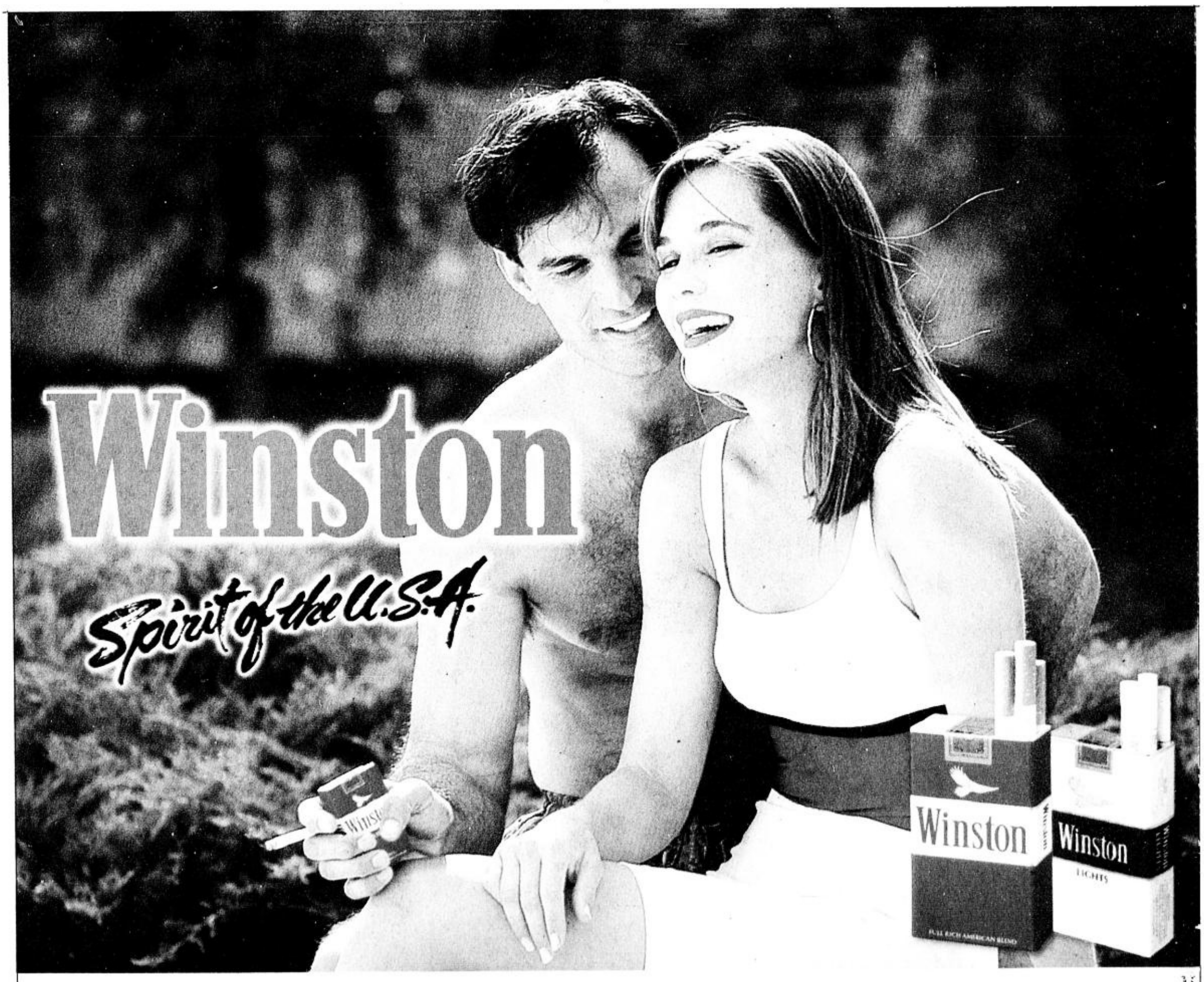

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ROCHESTER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Confident Jenny back in action

By Jong Arcano

JENNY Rosales will be exuding the confidence of a rising star who only last week earned the respect of the world's best female golfers when she joins the $1.2-million Wegmans Rochester LPGA Championship starting Thursday (Friday in Manila) at the Locust Hill Country Club in Pittsford, New York.

The 24-year-old Rosales should get some special attention after coming very close to scoring what could have been her breakthrough victory as a professional in the just-concluded Giant Eagle Classic in Vienna, Ohio.

Rosales, along with Annika Sorenstam and Lorie Kane, lost to Rachel Teske in a four-way playoff for the title.

With the paycheck worth $69,945 she won in the Giant Eagle, Rosales has advanced 15 rungs higher from 34th to 19th on the money list of the LPGA Tour. It's her highest position on the money list since joining the LPGA in 2000 with total winnings of $209,943 in 11 events.

The Giant Eagle paycheck though is next only to the $78,015 payoff she earned for a seventh place showing in last year's US Women's Open.

Her current income is already more than her 2000 ($109,075) and 2001 ($94,879) earnings combined and more than half of her 2002 ($342,887) take with at least a dozen more events left in her schedule.

It is big money Rosales owns in full since she has no management outfit to share it with.

Famed eye doctor Jack Arroyo of the American Eye Center who acts as her financial and management consultant, said that by doing the country proud with her impressive finishes, more local companies should be interested to put their logos in her apparel and golf bag.

"The support given to Jenny by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. as well as First Gentleman Mike Arroyo gives her some peace of mind and she can just keep her focus on improving her game," said Doctor Arroyo.

Arroyo is sending back Jenny's coach, Bong Lopez, to the US next week for another fine-tuning session with Rosales in New Jersey intended to keep her in shape for the big mission, the $2.5-million US Open in Portland, Oregon on July 3-6.

Jenny placed fifth in the Wegman's last year where she bagged $38,400.

Elsewhere:

In Illinois, Miguel Tabuena placed 12th out of 85 entries in the Pepsi Little People tournament.

In Florida, Lora Roberto scored 77-85 and failed to make it to the tournament proper of the US Women's Public Links.

Jenny's big bucks:

2002 US Open $78,015 (tied for 7th)

2003 Giant Eagle Classic $70,000 (T-2nd)

2002 Weetabix British Open $64,528 (T-4th)

2000 US Open $55,354 (T-12th)

2003 Michelob Light Open $49,886 (7th)

2003 Kraft Nabisco $35,600 (T-9th)

2002 Wegman's Rochester $38,400 (T-5th)

2003 McDonald's Championship $24,037 (T-11th)

2003 Lake Takefuji Classic $22,623 (T-9th)

2002 Nine Bridges $19,570 (T-16th)

JENNIFER Rosales is enjoying her highest position on the money list.

Tiger bristles at talk of a slump

HARRISON, New York—Tiger Woods isn't wasting time thinking about the US Open.

He's too busy trying to win the Buick Classic.

"You hit a bad shot, you have to get over it right there and then so you can get focused on the next one," Woods said Wednesday before an abbreviated pro-am round at rainy Westchester Country Club. "I had to get over this US Open pretty quickly so I could be focused and ready for this tournament."

After winning three of his first four events following off-season knee surgery, Woods arrived at the Buick Classic with only seven sub-70 rounds in his last five tournaments. The eight-time major champion tied for 20th last week at Olympia Fields, closing with rounds of 75 and 72 to finish 11 strokes behind winner Jim Furyk.

"I sat back Sunday night and took a hard look at some of the things I did wrong and some of the things I did right and tried to learn," said Woods, winless in the last four major championships after winning seven of the previous 11.

WOODS bounces a ball on his putter at the Buick Pro-Am. AP

He again bristled at talk of a slump.

"People just don't understand. I've won three times this year," Woods said. "I don't know what everyone's need is for categorizing everything. If I go out and win a couple of tournaments, all of a sudden, I'm playing great, I'm unstoppable. And if I don't win two weeks in a row, then all of a sudden, I'm in a slump again." *AP*

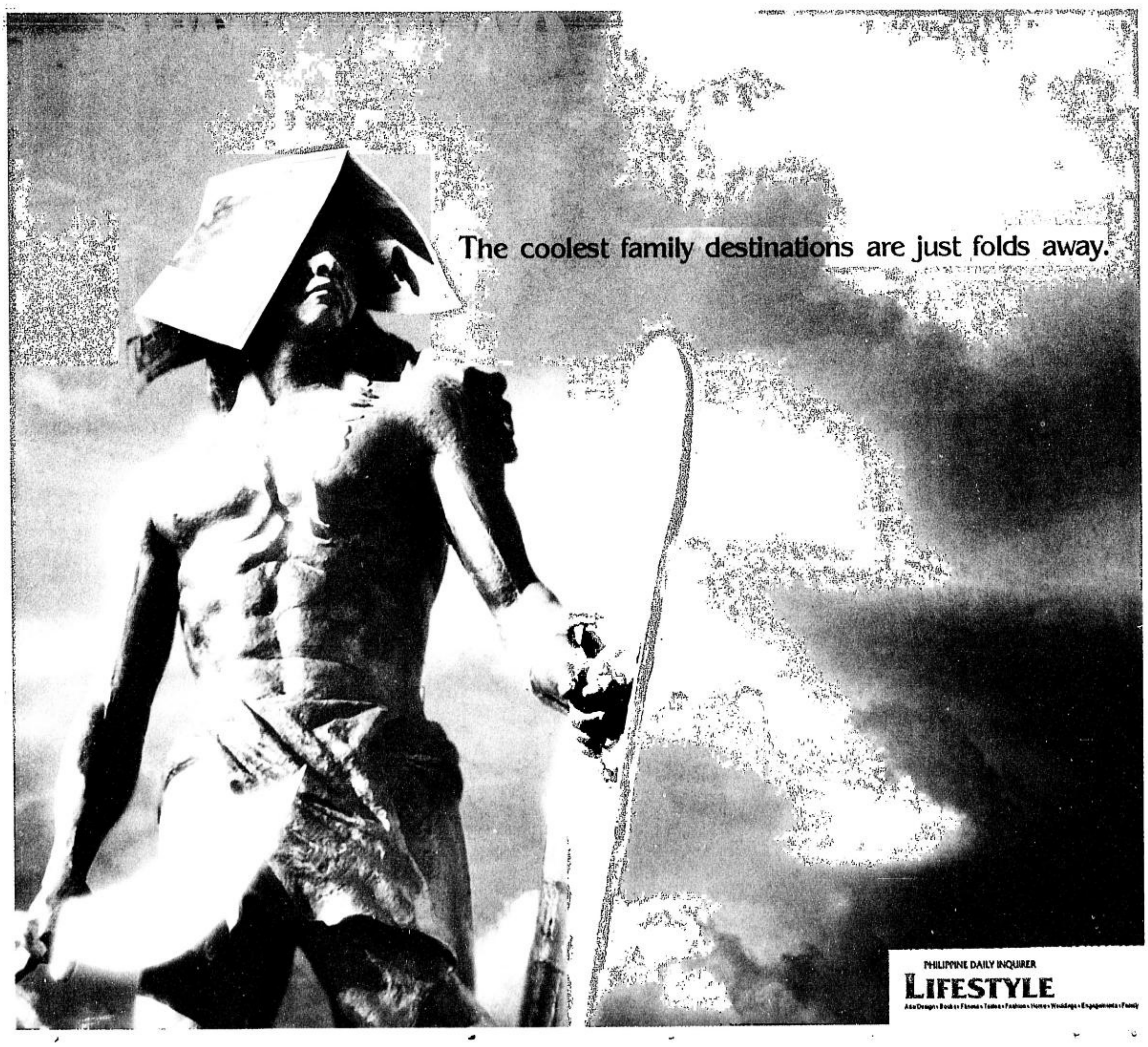
First Gentleman's Cup draws 20 companies

MORE than 20 big companies have pledged to send teams, ensuring the participation of some 300 players in the First Gentleman's Golf Cup on June 27 at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

The tournament, held under the aegis of the First Gentleman's Foundation, coincides with the birthday of the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo.

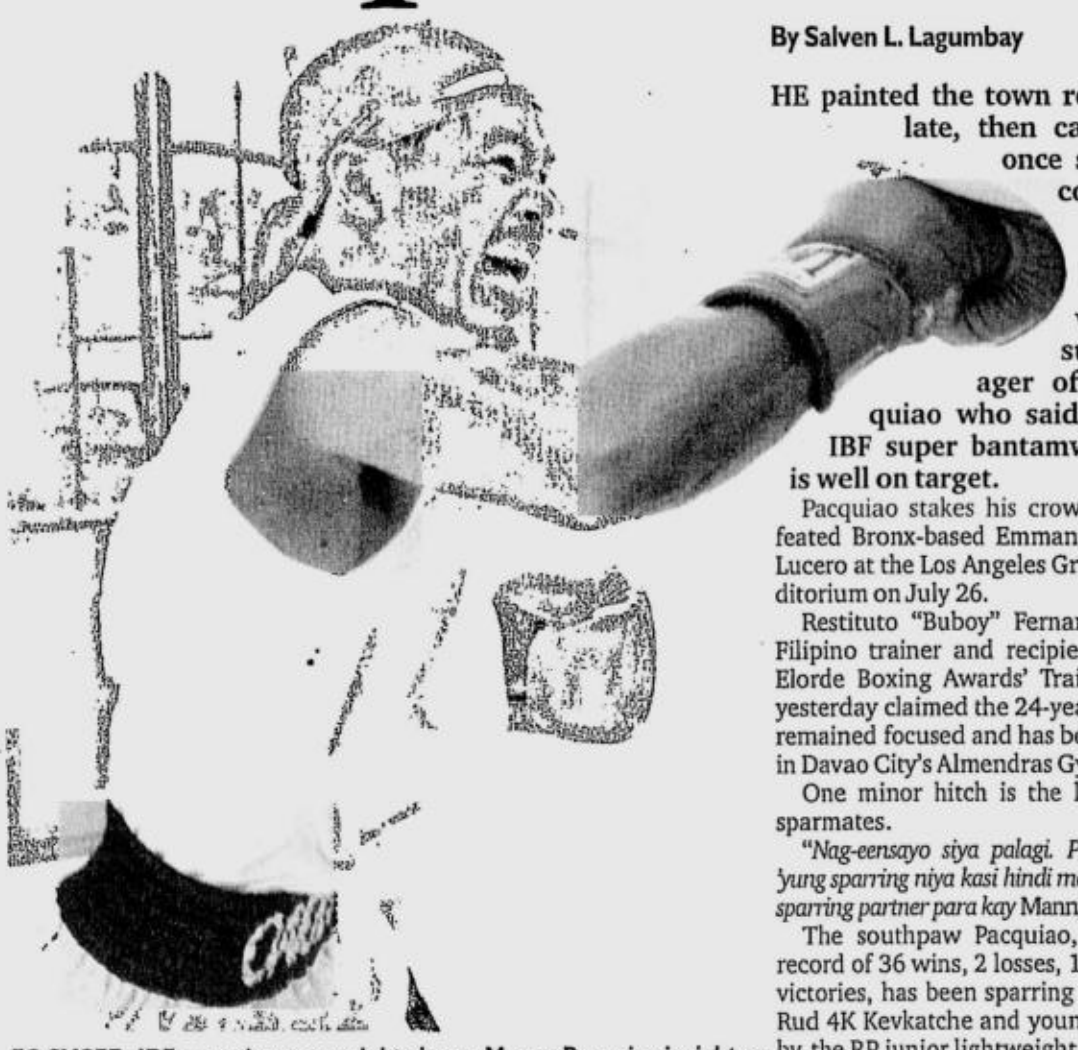
The event, launched last year at the same venue, was firmed up recently during a meeting between Arroyo and a group of businessmen.

Proceeds of the golf tournament are earmarked for soldiers and policemen under the Alay sa Kawal program and wards of The Haven, a center assisting abused women and girls set up by Gina de Venecia, president of the Congressional Spouses Foundation.



'Pacquiao needs sparmates'

By Salven L. Lagumbay



FOCUSED: IBF super bantamweight champ Manny Pacquiao is right on target for his title fight in Los Angeles, says his trainer.

HE painted the town red, stayed up late, then caused trouble once snubbed by a comely night-club songstress. But not to worry, assured the manager of Manny Pacquiao who said the reigning IBF super bantamweight champ is well on target.

Pacquiao stakes his crown against undefeated Bronx-based Emmanuel "Carnecerio" Lucero at the Los Angeles Grand Olympic Auditorium on July 26.

Restituto "Buboy" Fernandez, Pacquiao's Filipino trainer and recipient of this year's Elorde Boxing Awards' Trainer of the Year, yesterday claimed the 24-year-old champ has remained focused and has been training hard in Davao City's Almendras Gym.

One minor hitch is the lack of calibered sparmates.

"*Nag-eensayo siya palagi. Pero konti pa lang yung sparring niya kasi hindi madali maghanap ng sparring partner para kay* Manny," Fernandez said.

The southpaw Pacquiao, who parades a record of 36 wins, 2 losses, 1 draw and 28 KO victories, has been sparring with lightweight Rud 4K Kevkatche and younger brother Bobby, the RP junior lightweight champion.

When not sparring, Pacquiao works with the heavy bags, double-end bag, and the mitts.

"I'm hoping we can leave soon because Manny will have better sparring at the Wild Card Gym of Freddie Roach," Fernandez explained, adding that four or five different boxers will take turns sparring with Pacquaio in Los Angeles, compared to only one or two here.

Pacquiao faces Lucero in the fourth defense of the title he wrested from South African Lehlohonolo Ledwaba two years ago.

Lucero is undefeated in 22 fights, with 1 draw and 12 KO's.

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Slugfest at Malacañang

IT will be a first in Philippine sports when Malacañang Palace hosts a 68-round boxing card today.

"We are honored to do this because this is the first time that a boxing show will be held there," said promoter Edgardo "Boy" Cantada.

In the main event, Ranel Mercado takes on No. 4 ranked Al Deliguer in ten rounds.

Cantada said the promotion is part of the celebration of the 105th anniversary foundation of the Presidential Security Group through the invitation of Col. Delfin Bangit, the PSG group commander, and in coordination with Lt. Col. Danilo Agustin.

Three young warriors from the Lilo-an based Stonewall Boxing Club, led by Benedict Suico, will see action in the historic card.

The 17-year-old Suico, nephew of "Komong Bato" Randy, figures in a 6-round duel with Jojo Pateño. The Mandaue City-bred Suico is unbeaten in 4 fights, with 3 KO's.

Salven Lagumbay

UM turns back PCU in Games of Champions

GAMES TOMORROW
(*Makati Coliseum*)
2 p.m.—St. Benilde vs AdU
4 p.m.—La Salle vs Letran

UNIVERSITY of Manila, hobbled by fouls, turned back Philippine Christian University, 86-80, yesterday in the Petron-Grudge Games of Champions League 2003 at the Makati Coliseum.

Nine schools from the pre-tournament phase, co-sponsored by San Miguel, PCSO, Milo, adidas and championsleague.com.ph, will get invitations to the Round-of-32 national finals in November.

Center Ronnie Matias sizzled with 21 of his 29 points in the first 20 minutes while forward Louie Aquino scored successive 3-pointers to add 20 points as the Hawks, coached by veteran Loreto Tolentino, took control from the start.

PCU, coached by ex-Olympian Jimmy Mariano, was held down to 32 percent shooting and gave up 18 turnover points.

UM had 15 more field goal attempts in the first half alone, nine from beyond the 3-point range, and also enjoyed a 25-18 rebound advantage, 11-6 under the offensive glass.

The only bright for PCU came from the foul line where they had 19 attempts, 10 more than UM.

But the Dolphins missed 11 and struggled the rest of the way looking for alternate sources of offense.

But things took a big turn in the last quarter as PCU chipped away at the big chunk of UM lead, coming within 81-77 in the closing minutes.

The Hawks were not to be denied, however, hanging on from the line where they made 6 of their last six charities.

"*Di naman sa ano pero konting galaw namin, tinatawagan kami ng mga* referees *kaya nakabalik pa yung kalaban*," said Tolentino, still enraged at nearly losing what seemed like a blowout game for the Hawks.

A total of 33 fouls were called against UM, 24 with awards, PCU was whistled for 25 with 15 resulting in free throws.

Scores:

UM 86—Matias 29, Aquino 20, Gomez 19, Mejos 5, Litonjua D. Labitag 4, Espeneo 3, Litonjua R. 3, Castillo 0, Bernardos 0, Legaspi 0, Vidanes 0, Regalado 0.

PCU 80—Roque 24, Sanz 15, Guiyab 12, Espinas 8, Cecilia 8, Marnangon 6, Retaga 4, Garrido 2, Senining 1, Acraman 0.

Quarters: 22-13, 42-29, 66-52, 86-80.

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Death of a Bantay Dagat

COMMENTARY
By Vic Vic Villavicencio

ON May 3, 2003, around 1 in the morning, the Chair of the Calatagan Bantay-Dagat, Sixto Atienza, was gunned down by an unknown assailant during a Barangay Fiesta. Coming down from a makeshift stage he gave a speech. Kap Sixto was shot from the back of his neck to his face. According to initial reports, the gun person (sic) was not alone and that it was apparently planned and well executed. At the time of his death, Kap Sixto was the Director of the Balayan Bay Bantay Dagat Network."

The preceding paragraph is quoted from a report written by Riki Sandalo, Conservation Officer of the ICM Project for Balayan Bay and Adjacent Bays in Calatagan Peninsula.

The report also says it is generally believed that the assassination of Kap Sixto may be related to his relentless efforts, together with members of his team, to rid Calatagan waters of illegal fishermen. His campaigns had netted 121 illegal fishers, 26 boats and several cases filed in court.

Only in April, Kap Sixto's team apprehended a group of compressor fishermen from Cavite. An offer to drop the case and release the confiscated boats was turned down. The fighting *kapitan* soon received anonymous text messages like "*hanggang piyesta ka lang*."

The Philippine Game Fishing Foundation (PGFF had donated P50,000 to Kap Sixto's operating funds) joins World Wildlife Fund-Philippines in condemning the treacherous fatal attact on Kap Sixto and urges the Philippine National Police to find the killers of this latest hero and martyr for marine conservation.

Just when sports fishermen were beginning to notice improvements in the marine environment in Calatagan waters, something like this had to happen. I have faith that the PNP will solve this problem very soon.

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RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1--1. Vice Free 2. Bukambibig 3. Queen Ramasas 4. Sexy Royal 5. Fine Offer
Race 2--1. Adam's Call 2. Southern Charm 3. The Fox 4. Covert Lady
Race 3--1. Nag-Iisang Ikaw 2. Profit Margin 3. Touch of Luck 4. King Aldrin 5. Ganda
Race 4--1. Simply Great 2. Magnanimous 3. Absurd 4. Time Essential
Race 5--1. Dona Gelay 2. Court General 3. All Powerful 4. Princess Sophia 5. Top Bullet
Race 6--1. Batang Cabu 2. Masagana 3. Tervalac 4. Cue Artist 5. Standout
Race 7--1. Gifted Angel 2. Hasty 3. Real Diamond 4. Carolina Belle 5. King Asa/Will to Fight
Race 8--1. Moore Magic 2. Night Flight 3. Spirited Lady 4. Double Check 5. Color of the Wind
Race 9--1. Arrivederci 2. Bakasan 3. Tomahawk 4. Noble House 5. Free Again 6. Choice for Change

FFF, or to be a Filipino

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

ARE they doing everything to make the PBA saleable again?

Looks like it.

Everybody seems to have been given a role, from the commissioner down to the ball boy.

Don't believe me, but a memo has been sent out to PBA personnel: ``If you can't sell it, ship out."

In a bid to attract more fans, they even postponed the start of the semifinals to today, earning the ire of Coke coach Chot Reyes. Never mind that it derailed what Chot said was his team's focus on the crown, which he said began on Wednesday, the original day to start battle.

Chot is not saying another word, but I'm going to say it for him: the postponement favored Sta. Lucia, Coke's opponent for a finals berth.

It favored Sta. Lucia because the postponement gave Kenneth Duremdes, Sta. Lucia's top gun averaging 41 points a game, more time to recover from his calf injury.

It favored Sta. Lucia because two days of rest would surely give the Realtors ample time to make adjustments in lieu of Duremdes' absence.

It favored Sta. Lucia because, who knows, by Wednesday next week, Duremdes might be ready to ``rumble in the jungle.' By then, Duremdes will have only missed two games.

It's gone down this low.

First, excellence was supplanted by mediocrity. A format that penalized the strong launched Noli Eala's infant career this year as PBA commissioner.

The formula for failure was a success: it booted out fancied San Miguel Beer, it yanked out elimination's best, Batang Red Bull.

Drinkers have turned from toasting to roasting SMB, but the experts knew better. The Beermen were not totally at fault. FFF was the culprit: Format Fatally Flawed.

Batang Red Bull was the best in 18 games, losing just four on its way to topping the eliminations. Red Bull was but a mosquito's antenna away from the next round.

But in four games, all the luster of an 18-game toil vanished for Batang Red Bull. With its 14-4 mark razed by FFF, Batang Red Bull soon found itself erased from title contention.

Aren't valedictorians supposed to deliver valedictories?

Not in the PBA.

Not anymore.

Where have all the Prietos, Saluds, gone?

The learned cried foul. But was the whistle ever blown? Who could have had the heart to blow the whistle?

Not the author of FFF, Commissioner Eala. He'd be just too happy not to lend an ear. Ambition killed Caesar, remember? The crowd might turn into a mob.

And so, a new tack has to be found. Hype they now call it. Look for something that people will talk about, root for, die for.

Something silly, if not totally stupid, they found.

With Eala's blessings, wittingly or unwittingly, it's been unearthed: ``All Filipino versus Fil-Am."

If there's a hype more idiotic than that, it is this: That Caloy Loyzaga wear his jersey No. 14 again and be dispatched to play for Coke.

Marlou Aquino will be so thrilled by the idea that he could die laughing and, in the process, jeopardizing Sta. Lucia's perceived inexorable march to the finals.

Indeed, ethics is dead. The league will resort to any crap if only to avoid getting rapped.

Did Eala almost choke on his Coke when he heard Marlou Aquino say Sta. Lucia is a proud All Filipino team ready to do battle with a Fil-Am team like Coke?

Darn.

Name me a PBA player who is not a Filipino and I'll have him booked on the next PAL jet out of the country.

We are all Filipinos here. Fil-Am. Fil-Tongan. Fil-German. Whatever. How can one not be a Filipino if he answers to the definition of Filipino under our Constitution?

A Fil-Am is as Filipino as you and me.

To emphasize that Sta. Lucia's lineup is All Filipino is the year's most idiotic statement in sports. Anybody buying that can join the premise's proponent to an asylum.

Who is the purest Filipino among us?

My father is 90 percent Spanish, 8 percent Chinese, 2 percent Filipino. My mother is 70 percent Spanish, 30 percent Filipino. What will that make of me?

Robert Jaworski is 50 percent American and 50 percent Filipino because his father is an American and his mother a Filipino.

I don't know if Marlou Aquino has a Russian blood because his Rasputin height of 6-foot-9 (Rasputin was a towering Russian, in case you have forgotten) could possibly make him half Russian, beard and all. Whatever, he is and will always be a Filipino who has represented the country in many tournaments, including the 1998 Asian Games.

Unless you are holding a Constitution other than the Philippines to use against me, I am, like Aquino and Jaworski, a Filipino because our laws tell it so.

Do you know that President George W. Bush has Irish blood and yet, Americans don't call him Iri-Am?

Jeffrey Cariaso, other than his Chinese eyes, looks every inch a Filipino and yet, he is, for the crazy purpose of labeling those with ties to America, a Fil-Am.

In contrast, Jimmy Alapag is a dead ringer for a Filipino and yet, because of the quirks of the law, he is also a Fil-Am.

But Fil-Am or not, we are all Filipinos here. Even Jose Rizal isn't All Filipino. He is 60 percent Chinese.

So again, cut the bull, please.

All players playing in the PBA All Filipino are Filipinos. Period.

You say otherwise and I'll start digging on Eala's lineage.

Take a look at his eyes.

PLAYFUL TAULAVA: Phone Pals' man-mountain has 17 double-double games.

Peek to go one-on-one vs Taulava

By Roy Luarca

SIX inches and about 20 pounds.

These will be the glaring differences in height and bulk when Ali Peek goes head-to-head against Asi Taulava in the Alaska-Talk N Text Samsung PBA All-Filipino Cup semifinal series.

Peek, a rock-hard 6-foot-3 banger, will be dwarfed by Taulava, 6-foot-9 and 270 pounds, but there's no telling who'll emerge winner in their duel inside the paint.

Peek, for one, is regarded as one of the league's strongest players, compensating for his lack in ceiling with powerful upper body moves and a potent jump hook.

Peek also happens to be the most consistent among the Aces, scoring 13.5 points, grabbing 7.5 rebounds and blocking 1.2 attempts a game.

However, Peek's stats pale once ranged against Taulava's averages of 25.4 points, 16.1 rebounds and 1.9 blocks. These figures, in fact, are tops in the league.

Taulava boasts 17 double-double games this conference and is one of only three players averaging double digits in points and rebounds.

There's no doubt Talk N Text coach Joel Banal will exploit Taulava's overall edge over Peek.

Taulava threw in a triple-double performance, the first of his career, as the Phone Pals nipped the Aces, 89-88, on April 30. It avenged the Phone Pals 96-78 loss to the Aces in their first meeting on March 2 when Taulava was serving a two-game suspension.

"Height is one advantage we have over Alaska," Banal said. "We hope to cash in on that in this series."

Of course, Alaska coach Tim Cone is aware that Peek couldn't probably stop Taulava by his lonesome.

That's why, Cone also intends to assign either 7-footer EJ Feihl or 6-foot-5 Don Allado on Taulava.

Then, with the likelihood that no one could neutralize Taulava alone, Cone may have to employ a double-team on the hulking Fil-Tongan.

If this still fails, Cone may gamble and give special instructions for Peek to go mano-a-mano against Taulava.

Who'll give in to the battering is begging for an answer. One thing is certain, though, it's going to be a mammoth battle.

The Rock versus the Man-Mountain is indeed very interesting.

Alaska-Tal Coke-SLR

WYNNE Arboleda (left) and Roger Yap of FedEx chase the ball with Purefoods' Rodney Santos.

By Marc Anthony Reyes

GAMES TODAY *(Philsports)*
5 p.m.—Alaska vs TnT
7:30 p.m. —Coca-Cola vs SLR

FOUR teams. Five games. One goal. These are the raw numbers involved in the PBA Samsung All Filipino Cup twin semifinals series which starts today at the Philsports arena.

Alaska Milk squares off with Talk N Text in the first semifinal pairing at 5 p.m. while defending champion Coca-Cola goes up against Sta. Lucia Realty in the main encounter at 7:30 p.m.

The winners of the two best-of-five duels will advance to the championship playoffs which will be a best-of-seven affair.

The Alaska-Talk N Text clash is anybody's game but Coca-Cola enjoys a decisive edge over Sta. Lucia with the absence of ace Realtor Kenneth Duremdes, who is expected to miss at least two games due to a strained left calf muscle.

The high-flying Duremdes was the hottest player in the quarterfinals with a total of 82 points in two games until the injury he suffered late in a winning game against San Miguel Beer. Doctors at first said he could be out for three weeks but a medical check early this week revealed Duremdes suffered just a minor injury which could allow him rejoin the team next week.

No less than the two most exciting rookie points guards in the league–TnT's Jimmy Alapag and Alaska's Mike Cortez–will be the focus of attention when the Phone Pals and the Aces mix it up.

While Cortez is more popular as the top

Even mo sure to the fan

ALAPAG exceeds expectations.

rookie pick this year, Alapag has turned out to be the better player. He leads the Rookie of the Year race with 1,298 statistical points which also placed him sixth place overall in the MVP derby, where his teammate Asi Taulava is

BAP inks grassroots program with DILG

By Roy Luarca

A TRULY mass-based grassroots development program has been launched by the the Basketball Association of the Philippines and the Department of Interior and Local Government.

Starting from the barangay level, the program will graduate to the municipal, provincial, regional and ultimately to the national level by December.

Interior secretary Joey Lina and BAP president Tiny Literal signed the memorandum of agreement Monday night. Also present were DILG Undersecretary lawyer Agnes Devanadera, BAP secretary general Graham Lim, deputy secretary general Jun Lavadia and chief finance officer Tony Fabico.

"Basketball is undoubtedly the most popular sport in the country, and so we are making this an entry port in DILG's sports campaign in the countryside," said Lina. "Eventually, we will also branch out to other sports as well."

Under the program, the BAP and the DILG will jointly train DILG and local government units personnel personnel as basketball coaches, coordinators, trainers, tournament officials, coordinators for sports medicine.

Under the proposal, the inter-barangay basketball competition is being planned to start in August, the inter-town in September, inter-provincial in October, inter-regional November and the national final in December.

Lavadia, who is also a councilor of Naga City, will be the national coordinator.

"Yugoslavia has only about 12 million people but there are already three Yugoslav players in the NBA," said Lavadia.

DILG Secretary Lina (center) the signing of the memorand Tony Fabico, Graham Lim and

lk N Text, semis up

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

tch-ups bring s back

CORTEZ lives up to the hype.

showing the way.

The 5-foot-9 Alapag is averaging 16.4 points, 7.3 assists, 4.5 rebounds per game with an accuracy of 36.8 percent from the three-point lane.

But Alaska coach Tim Cone is confident Cortez would outshine Alapag.

"He has the ability to really surprise you with the little things he does," said Cone of Cortez, who is norming 13.4 points, 8.9 rebounds and 1.8 assists.

"The point guard match-up will be very exciting" said Phone Pals coach Joel Banal. "But they key in the series is how the team will work around these two very talented players."

While the Phone Pals clearly have the edge in having Taulava and a host of role-playing locals, Cone also has explosive guys like Ali Peek, Don Allado and John Arigo. And he has the 7-foot giant EJ Feihl to contain the 6-9 Taulava.

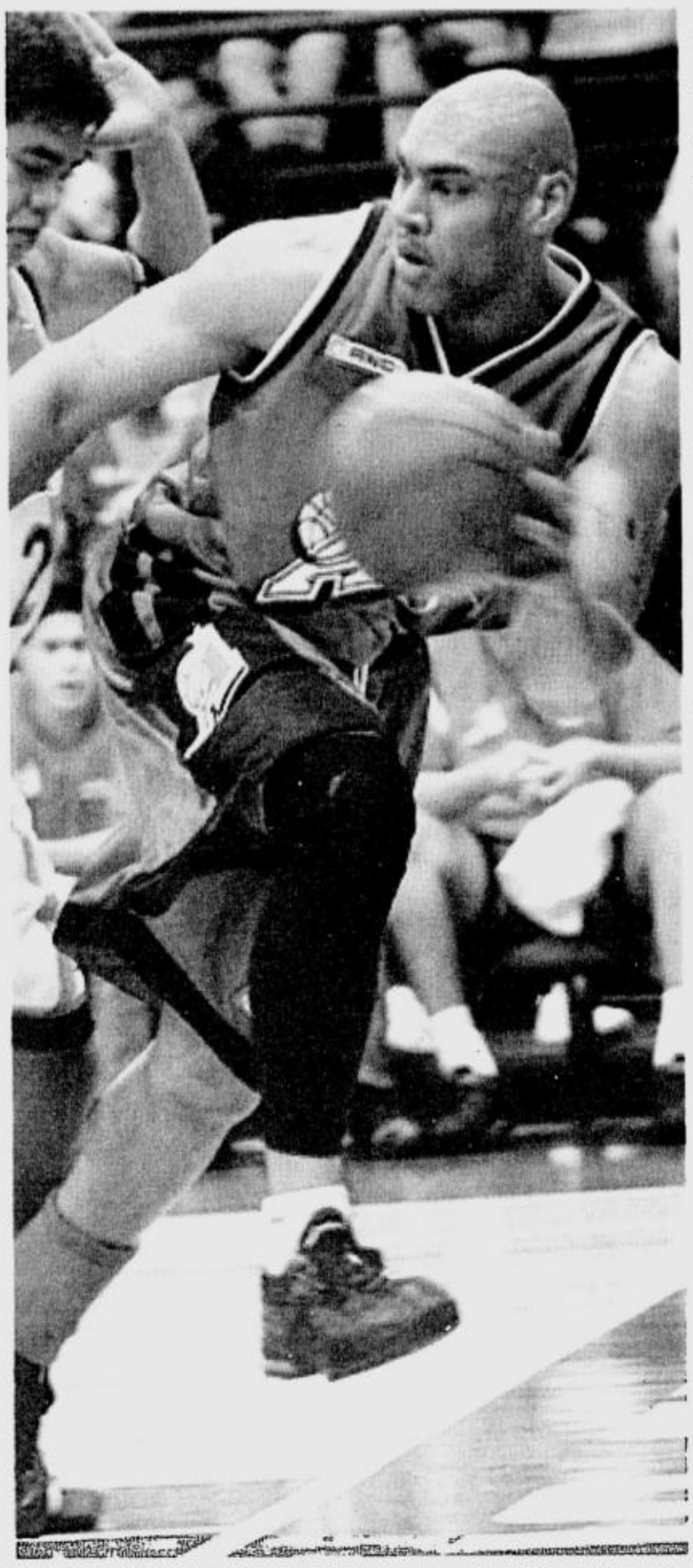
The Aces are hoping to reach their 21st finals and eclipse Crispa's record of 20, while the Phone Pals are gunning for only their third championship since joining the league in 1996.

Coca Cola, spearheaded by Jeffrey Cariaso, Johnny Abarrientos, Raffi Reavis and Rudy Hatfield, goes into the semifinals as the top team in the assist department with an average of 21.3 per game during the eliminations.

Aside from missing Duremdes, the Realtors also have problems underneath although they boast of the 6-9 Marlou Aquino and 6-5 Dennis Espino. They are dead last in rebounding (44.9per game), offensive rebounding (12.3pg) and second chance points (8.4ppg).

This is the third semis stint in four conferences for the Tigers, while the Realtors are only in their fourth semis since this format began in 1999.

"With less stars, our team has proven that sheer hard work and patience will pay off in the end," said Tigers coach Chot Reyes, who is defending a title Coca-Cola won in its very first stint in the finals last year.



HARDWORKING PEEK: The Rock is a banger capable of stopping Taulava.

Top guards, tough rivalry in Final 4

MIKE Cortez hogged the spotlight at the start. He was top draftee and a can't-miss prospect.

Jimmy Alapag came through the backdoor. He was the 10th selection, whose main drawback was his 5-foot-7 height.

The 6-foot Cortez has lived up to the hype, but Alapag has exceeded expectations.

If their numbers in the Samsung PBA All Filipino Cup were to be the sole basis, then its safe to say that the limelight has shifted to Alapag.

But everything starts from scratch in the semifinals. Statistics are thrown out of the window as play shifts to a best-of-five and match-ups become the norm for the coaches.

Predictably, Cortez and Alapag will have to cross paths again as starting point guards of their respective teams, Cortez for Alaska and Alapag for Talk N Text.

Their coaches are convinced that the outcome of the series will largely depend on how the two speedy playmakers fare against each other.

"He (Cortez) has the ability to really surprise you with the little things he does," said Alaska coach Tim Cone.

"He (Alapag) has become a leader in this team," said Talk N Text coach Joel Banal, who believes that the Cortez-Alapag showdown will spice up the series.

"There's no doubt that the series will be exciting partly because of their match-up. I think they are very similar in many ways, particularly in their ability to take over a game," said Banal.

Alapag would rather downplay the match-up and put emphasis on team play as the key to winning the series.

"It's not about him and me. It's not about me wanting to prove something against Alaska. They made a decision they felt was best for their team when they selected Mike. All I'm concerned about is to help the team win," said Alapag, a former member of the national pool.

Cortez, of course, would love to prove that he's truly No. 1, especially against the guy looming as his main rival as the league's top playmaker in the years to come.

This series is just the appetizer to what is certain to be a long Cortez-Alapag rivalry. *Roy Luarca*

China's first NBA champ wants another year with Spurs

BEIJING— Fresh from winning an NBA championship with the San Antonio Spurs, towering Chinese center Mengke Bateer is now hoping to keep his NBA career going when he becomes a free agent on July 1, his manager said Tuesday.

Despite not playing in any of the Spurs playoff games or in the championship series against the New Jersey Nets which the Spurs won on Sunday, Bateer, as Asia's first-ever NBA champion, is eager to prove that he belongs in the world's top basketball league.

"The Spurs have the right to give him an offer by July 1, so until then, Bateer's future is still somewhat uncertain," the center's Beijing-based agent Xia Song told AFP.

"He definitely wants to sign with the Spurs and stay in San Antonio." If the Spur's re-sign the six-foot-eleven (2.11 meter) center to a new contract, Bateer hopes to play for the team during the NBA summer league, a league for lower-level players hoping to improve their skills, Xia said.

Bateer appeared in 12 regular season games for the Spurs this year, averaging 0.8 points and 0.8 rebounds per game, but was not included on the team's playoff roster.

If the Spurs do not sign him, it was likely that Bateer would seek to try out in the summer league with another NBA club, Xia said.

"As far as the CBA (China Basketball Association) is concerned, they understand Bateer's situation and basically we're on the same page and I don't think it will be a problem for him to play," he said.

Like Houston Rocket center Yao Ming and Los Angeles Clipper Wang Zhizhi, China's two other centers in the NBA, Bateer is committed to play for China's national team, which is currently preparing for the Asian Basketball Championships in early September.

"If Bateer plays in the Boston summer league from July 12-18, then he still can get back to China and train with the team for a month before the Asian championships," Xia said. *AFP*

SPORTS nagalle

VOL. I NO. 019

Bong Barrameda

Sex, lies & scandals

A serving of 7 questions, from easiest to toughest, each with a corresponding point value. Can you score a perfect 100 (or, at least, beat the other 'sports genius/geniuses' beside you)?

1 > 3 Pts.
o True / o False: Nancy Navalta-touted in 1995 as the next Filipina to become Asia's sprint queen-was medically proven to be a 'he.'

2 > 5 Pts.
Which heavyweight boxing legend-dubbed 'The Manassa Mauler'-lost to Gene Tunney in the so-called 'Battle of the Long Count"?
o Jack Johnson
o Jack Dempsey

3 > 7 Pts.
Which PBA player was deported in the course of the 2000 All-Filipino Cup for submitting fraudulent documents stating that he is a Filipino?
o Al Segovia
o Roy Parker
o Sonny Alvarado

4 > 10 Pts.
In 1994 Tonya Harding was found to have arranged a clubbing attack on bitter rival Nancy Kerrigan and subsequently stripped of her US title in which sport?
o Figure skating
o Tennis
o Swimming

5 > 20 Pts.
Which tennis player was sued-albeit, unsuccessfully--for 'palimony' by Marilyn Barnett, her former lover, in 1981?
o Billie Jean King
o Chris Evert
o Martina Navratilova
o Gabriela Sabatini

6 > 25 Pts.
In what year was Team Zamboanga City of the Philippines disqualified as World Series champion of the Little League for fielding overage players?
o 1990
o 1991
o 1992
o 1993

7 > 30 Pts.
At the 84th Boston Marathon in1980, an unknown runner came from out of nowhere to win the women's race. But suspicions were raised when it was found she didn't appear on race videotapes until near the end of the race. The accepted theory was that she had hopped a subway for much of the race, ran the final mile or half-mile, and proudly accepted the winner's medal. A week later, she was officially disqualified. Who?

ANSWERS/ A29

shakes hand with BAP president Literal after m of agreement Monday night. From left are Jun Lavadia.

Rodriguez new Spring coach

MULTI-TITLED coach Francis Rodriguez has been tapped as new head coach of Spring Cooking Oil in the National Basketball League national finals.

Rodriguez was taken in to replace Bobby Parks, who resigned after the Bulacan-based Cooking Oil Experts absorbed five straight defeats.

Rodriguez, a former national coach who steered the San Sebastian Stags to several NCAA titles, said he accepted the position as a challenge.

"This team needs major repair. There are players whose attitude are affecting the cohesion of the team," said Rodriguez, who also mentored the Davao Eagles in the defunct Metropolitan Basketball Association.

Rodriguez, however, feels that the players have changed somewhat in their last two games.

"Lumalaban na," said Rodriguez.

For the team to be truly competitive, however, Rodriguez said he needs a legitimate point guard and another big man.

Rodriguez had in mind either Jomar Rubi or Dennis Miranda for the backcourt position and Chris de Jesus, a 6-foot-4 former Eagle at the center slot.

"So far, only Jovy (Sese) is my legitimate big man. He needs help."

"I'm hopeful that the team could still recover," said Rodriguez. "Any way there are seven games left in the elimination round.

Rodriguez's appointment was announced by team owner Tac Padilla. *Roy Luarca*

Brazil media give Becks short shrift

RIO DE JANEIRO—Brazil, the world's top soccer nation, virtually ignored David Beckham's move from Manchester United to Real Madrid on Wednesday.

Beckham's transfer was virtually disregarded by Brazilian media more interested in Wednesday night's Libertadores Cup match between Medellin and Santos in Colombia.

The sports daily *Lance* dedicated one page to Beckham's move, hidden away towards the back of the paper, much of it speculating on where he might fit into the star-studded Spanish team.

In contrast, the newspaper gave a double-page spread to Santos teenagers Diego and Robinho trying their luck at golf at the team hotel in Medellin.

Even the much-maligned Confederations Cup in France, where Brazil kick off their campaign against Cameroon, was given more space.

The *Folha de Sao Paulo* was equally unimpressed by the Beckham deal.

"Beckham is hardly likely to take Ronaldo's place in the team although he will be a rival in the marketing stakes," it said.

BECKHAM: Minor news.

In Tokyo, Beckham spoke for the first time about his move to Real Madrid on Thursday, saying he was looking forward to the challenge.

"I'm very excited to become part of Real Madrid," Beckham told a news conference carried by Japanese television. "It's a very exciting experience and it's going to be a very good challenge for me on the football field and off it," he said, adding that he was looking forward to living in Spain.

The England captain agreed to join Real Madrid from Manchester United on Tuesday in a deal worth up to 35 million euros (US$41.06 million).

Meanwhile, Real Madrid might also be chasing Manchester United target Ronaldinho.

Real president Florentino Perez phoned Paris St. Germain president Francis Graille this week to ask about the Brazil World Cup winner, the *L'Equipe* sports daily reported Thursday.

Ronaldinho's agent and brother Roberto Assis said last week Manchester United, Real Madrid, Barcelona, AC Milan and Inter were interested in the player.

Manchester wants Ronaldinho to play alongside Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy.

Beckham, regarded as no more than a run-of-the-mill player by the standards of a nation which has won five World Cups, made an unimpressive visit to Brazil for the World Club championship in 2000.

He was booed along with the rest of the team in their first match against Necaxa for what Brazilians regarded as insular behavior by the English club, which shut off its training sessions and ignored fans who had gathered at Rio airport to welcome them.

Beckham was sent off before halftime in the match and suspended from the next game which United lost 3-1 to Brazil's Vasco da Gama. *Reuters, AFP*

MASTERFUL: Japan's Shunsuke Nakamura (right) punches the air as he celebrates his goal off a stunned Mike Utting (center), New Zealand's goalkeeper. REUTERS

France, Japan get going

PARIS—France finally won again in a major international tournament while Japan managed to shut out the competition's underdog Wednesday as the Confederations Cup got started.

The host nation barely got by Colombia 1-0 on a contentious penalty in Lyon, while Japan soundly defeated New Zealand 3-0 in Saint-Denis.

After failing to score a single goal in defense of its 1998 World Cup title at soccer's showcase event last year, France finally found the net on Thierry Henry's powerful penalty blast in the 39th minute.

Shunsuke Nakamura and Hidetoshi Nakata led the way for Japan. Nakamura scored twice and fellow Italian league player Nakata found the net once.

Along with France, the other favorite to win the eight-nation competition is current World Cup champion Brazil. The South Americans have decided that Adriano, Parma's prolific scorer who finished fifth with 15 goals in the Italian league this past season, would start in the place of the absent Ronaldo, who is finishing his club season with Real Madrid.

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira was also considering Fabiano, a 22-year-old forward with Sao Paulo. But Fabiano was diagnosed with a thigh injury Wednesday and ruled out.

Brazil faces Cameroon in the Stade de France on Thursday.

On Wednesday, South America's defensive leaders nearly shut out France.

If Colombia's strikeforce had been half as efficient as its defensive line, the South American champion could well have scored a major upset. *AP*

Fastest men quarrel ahead of US track meet

SANTA CLARA, California—Sprint rivals Tim Montgomery and Maurice Greene were involved in a war of words on Wednesday almost as explosive as their 100-meter starts.

"I don't respect no one that don't respect me," world record holder Montgomery told reporters when asked about Greene, who held the record until last September.

"Stupid," said Greene of Montgomery when quizzed later about his fellow American's decision to leave his coach Trevor Graham last year.

The two sprinters traded verbal jabs during and after a news conference on the eve of the US championships in nearby Palo Alto.

The pair will not clash on the track during the competition to decide the US team for the world championships in Paris in August. Montgomery will run the 100 meters and Greene the 200. *Reuters*

Marion Jones waits for baby

PALO ALTO, California— American triple Olympic gold medallist Marion Jones is looking forward to a speedy birth.

Jones, 27, is eight months pregnant and is eagerly anticipating the arrival of her first baby on the July 21 due date, said the father Tim Montgomery on Wednesday.

"She's doing great," Montgomery said Wednesday. "She's looking forward to having it tomorrow. Any time now. Every day I'm asking her, 'are you feeling anything? Is it moving?'" *AFP*

For the past 9 years, the Philippine Daily Inquirer has topped the Asia Research Organization Readership Survey as the No.1 broadsheet in the country. This year, we've done it again, thanks to the faith of our readers, advertisers, dealers, and partners who remain confident in our commitment to public service. We're glad that whatever your reading style, you have made us a part of your life.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

News that makes a difference

SPORTSWATCH

RP lady booters prevail

THE PHILIPPINE women's football team ended its campaign in the Asian Women's Championship in Bangkok, Thailand with a 2-1 victory over Guam. It was the Filipinas' first win in the tournament. Guam scored the first goal in the 24th minute, but RP skipper Jo Loren equalized eight minutes later. Rhea Penales, RP's most influential player on the pitch, knocked in the decider. "It's nice to end the tournament on a winning note. We came here for the experience and to learn and we have learned a lot," said RP coach Marlon Maro.

NC officials Scoop guests

NEWLY installed commissioner Graham Lim and officials of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) will be the guests in today's Scoop sa Kamayan weekly session at the Kamayan Restaurant on West Ave. in Quezon City. Lim, who is also the secretary general of the Basketball Association of the Philippines, will be joined by incumbent NCAA president, Fr. Hernan Omecillo, OAR and vice president, Dr. Ramon Cercado. Also expected to attend the session, sponsored by Photokina Marketing, are Frank Gusi Jr., chair of this year's management committee and some of his members and coaches of the competing teams, led by Arturo Valenzona of the defending champion San Sebastian College and Jimmy Mariano of Philippine Christian University.

Diet tops Atlanta golf

MARIANO See Diet wound up Class A champion in the 3rd Atlanta Invitational Golf Tournament held recently at the Lakeside course of Caliraya Springs Golf and Country Club in Cavinti, Laguna. Other winners were Jaime Cabasa in Class B and Fewa Atienza in Class C. The event organized by Atlanta Industries drew 47 participants from the construction sector.

Garma heads chessfest

GARMA

INTERNATIONAL Master Chito Garma leads a field of titled players vying in the P114,000 Gov. Remedios Petilla Open chess tournament to be held in Tacloban City on June 26-29. Garma is favored to take the P50,000 top purse against the likes of FIDE Masters Ferdie Donguines, National Masters Mirabeau Maga and Rodolfo Diaz, and candidate master Melvin Merelos. An outright NM norm will be awarded to any untitled player who will rule the tournament. For inquiries, call the Tacloban City Executive Chess Club at 0920-829-1086.

Didcott leads winners

COLIN Didcott topped the Class O division of the recent 2nd Makati Square Billiards Association Eight-Ball Challenge at the Makati Cinema Square. Phelps Deroca took Class A honors while Gary Fernando clinched the Class B title. The Class C plum went to Mark Jemm Roquid. They received brand new cue sticks aside from the trophies from MSBA president Joel Bananto.

Formula 3 GP tomorrow

THE COUNTRY'S only international race series, the Formula 3 GP will be holding its second leg in the Batangas Racing Circuit on June 21-22 and will be coupled with the 2003 Casino Filipino Grand Prix Series. The event is sponsored by Addict Mobile, Yokohama, Denso and Regional Container Lines. AF3 Racing Teams seeing action are the Shell-Casino Filipino-Fujitsu Ten-Team Tom's, Castrol-Ambi Pur-Team Goddard, Denso-JF3 and Petron Speedtech Asia. Roland Hermoso, a former Formula Toyota champ, joins the Speedtech Asia team with hardly any laps in the car. Despite that fact, Roland finished 2nd in the promotion class in his very first F3 race.

RP ready to host F3 races

THE PHILIPPINES, specifically the Batangas Racing Circuit, can now host international Formula 3 championships and road bikes series. That's because the racetrack in Rosario, Batangas recently got a Grade Four approval from two world governing motorsports bodies–the federation International de l'Automobile (FIA) and the Fedration Internationale du Motorcycliste (FIM). A Grade Four License means that the racetrack conforms with world quality safety standards and track design to host Formula 3 events. Automobile Association of the Philippines executive director Mandy Eduque and Motorsports officer-in-charge Jun Espino recommended the reclassification of the Batangas Racing Circuit. FIM-UAM Asian Motorcycle Union vice president Macky Carapiet was also instrumental in the upgrading.

World Slasher final

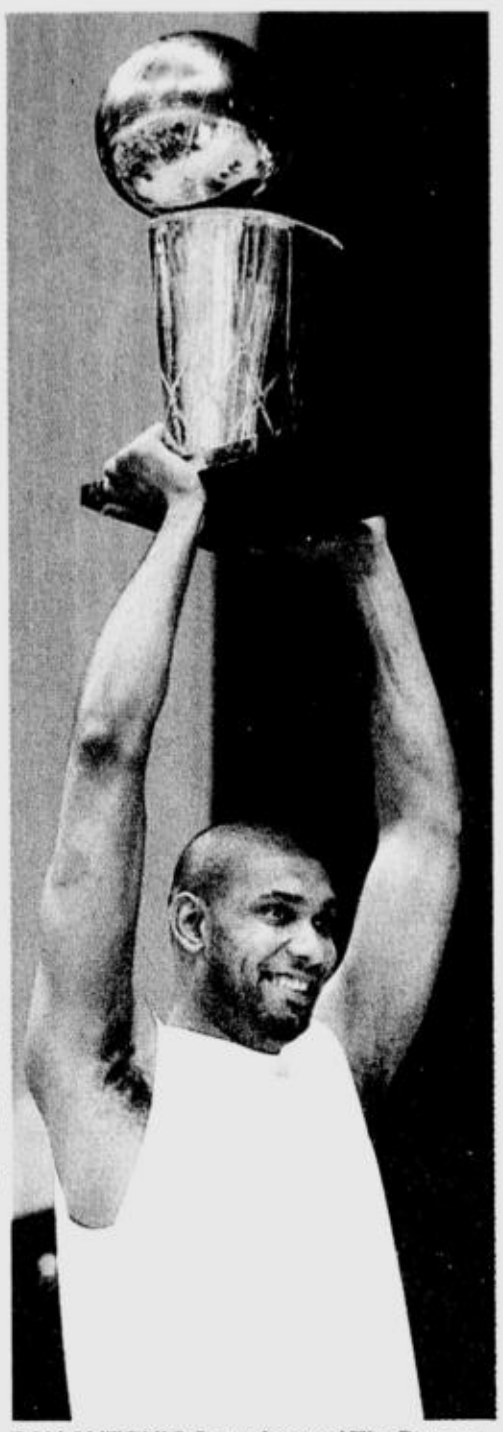
R&B Farm Binangonan of Calude Bautista posted four straight victories at the end of elimination matches Wednesday to give Philippine cockers the lead in the World Slasher 8-Cock Derby at the Araneta Coliseum. The four-cock finals will be held today. Also with four wins in this derby hosted by Nene Araneta, Ito Ynares and Jun Santiago are KGR St. Joseph of Mayor Nene Aguilar and Gerry Ramos, Islander RB of Rey Briones, JPC-MW Ray Showdown of Danny Ty, JC and R. Yu and Bumble Bee Balbina III of Butch Macasaet.

SPORTS noodle

ANSWERS From page A27

1. True
2. Jack Dempsey
3. Sonny Alvarado
4. Figure skating
5. Billie Jean King
6. 1992
7. Rosie Ruiz

Spurs celebrate in barge parade



SAN ANTONIO Spurs forward Tim Duncan holds the NBA Championship trophy at the Alamodome, at the end of the parade. REUTERS

SAN ANTONIO—The San Antonio Spurs celebrated their second NBA championship in a familiar way.

Taking a cue from their first title celebration in 1999, the Spurs had a barge parade down the city's famous Riverwalk Wednesday, followed by a boisterous rally with 50,000 people at the Alamodome.

The Riverwalk was packed with fans, who cheered players and the gold trophy that the Spurs won Sunday by defeating the New Jersey Nets in Game 6 of the NBA Finals.

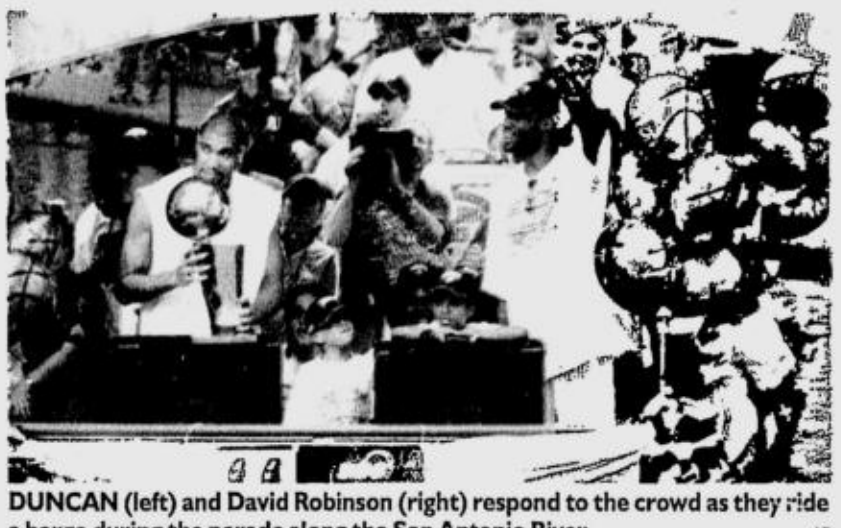
A loud chant of "MVP! MVP!" rang out as Tim Duncan, the most valuable player during the regular season and in the finals, hugged the trophy and waved to the tens of thousands of well-wishers lining the river's edge.

"It was a lot of fun to be out there and hear all the people screaming," Duncan said afterward. "It was everything it was in '99. San Antonio fans are so loyal to their team."

Joining Duncan on the final barge was David Robinson, who ended his stellar 14-year career as a winner. Robinson smiled broadly as fans in silver and black cheered for him, many of them also waving American flags.

Near the beginning of the barge parade, Victoria Bustos held up a homemade poster for Robinson.

"He's the biggest inspiration in my life when he came here," Bustos said of the 7-foot-1 center, credited with saving the franchise when he joined the Spurs in 1989. "There's serendipity, and then there's David."



DUNCAN (left) and David Robinson (right) respond to the crowd as they ride a barge during the parade along the San Antonio River. AP

Duncan said it's going to be strange to not have Robinson for the first tipoff next season.

"He's been there from Day 1," he said. "I've been whispering all year for him to stick around for another year."

At the Alamodome, Robinson received the biggest burst of applause while Tina Turner's hit "Simply the Best" played in the background. He heaped praise on the Spurs who will remain after he retires.

"San Antonio, you have the best group of guys in the NBA," he said of his teammates. "These men, not only can they play basketball, they have character."

While many came out to see Robinson, other players were also celebrated. Ryan Faircloth, 12, was at the Riverwalk mostly to see shooting guard Stephen Jackson, while his 12-year-old cousin Ariel Calderon was giddy about the chance to see French point guard Tony Parker.

"I love Parker — I just love him," she said. And she was not disappointed when he and Manu Ginobili floated by just ahead of Duncan and Robinson: "I love him even more," she said. AP

Wizards, Raptors have new head coaches

WASHINGTON—The Washington Wizards are set to name Eddie Jordan as their new head coach, The Washington Post reported Thursday citing NBA sources.

Jordan, assistant coach of the New Jersey Nets, agreed to a four-year deal with the Wizards, the newspaper said.

Jordan, 48, was interviewed by team owner Abe Pollin Wednesday and given a tour of MCI Center, the team's home arena, the TV reports said.

The Wizards fired Doug Collins in May after two consecutive 37-45 seasons. Jordan would be the team's seventh coach in eight years.

Jordan has one year left on his contract with New Jersey but the Nets will not seek compensation, The Washington Post reported.

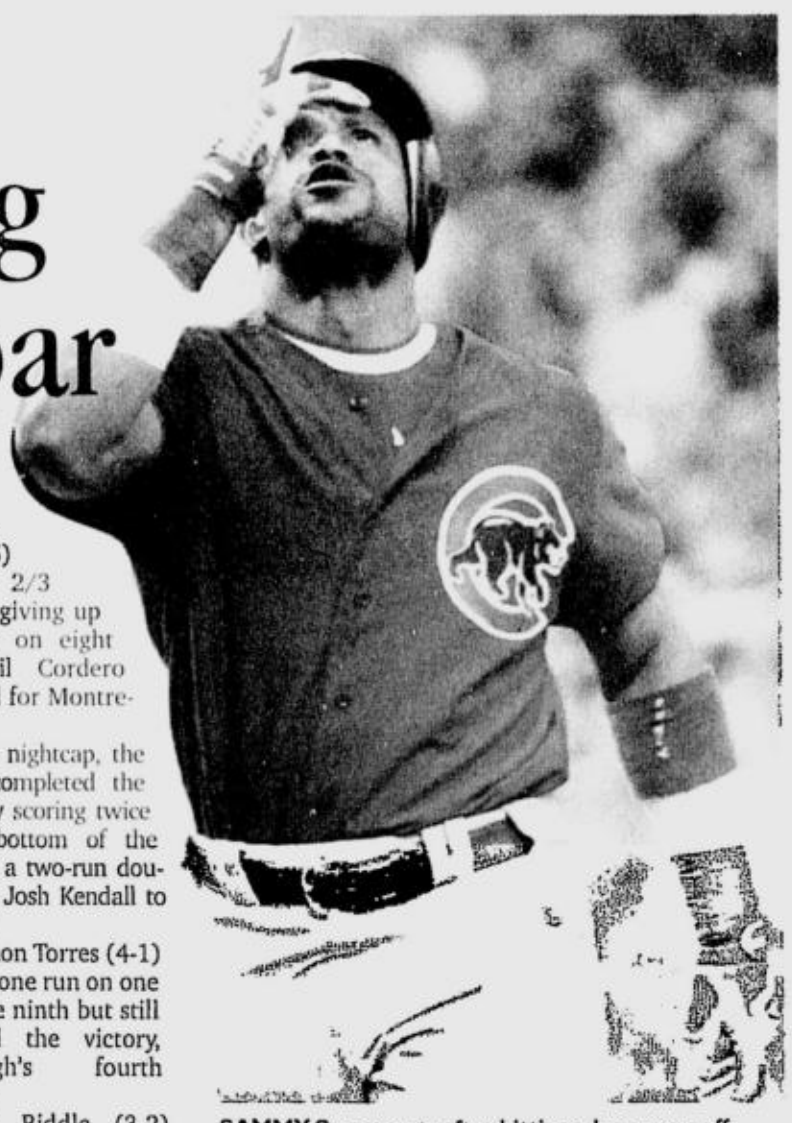
Meanwhile, the Toronto Raptors named Kevin O'Neill as their new head coach on Wednesday with a hope he will get the team back on track after a dismal, injury-plagued season.

O'Neill has never been a head coach in the National Basketball Association, but the Raptors, now on their fifth coach heading into their ninth season, believe he is the man to jumpstart the team that finished third-worst in the league.

O'Neill faces a major rebuilding job after the team missed the playoffs for the first time in three seasons with 24 wins and 58 losses.

"I think what I want most from our team is to see us improve daily, become a consistent group that plays as a team and plays hard. I think the wins and losses will take care of themselves," said O'Neill. Reuters

Sosa back with a bang as Cubs roar



SAMMY Sosa reacts after hitting a home run off Reds pitcher Jimmy Haynes in the fifth inning. AP

CINCINNATI—Sammy Sosa homered, singled and drove in two runs on his return following a seven-game suspension to lead the Chicago Cubs to a 4-1 victory over the Cincinnati Reds in the National League Wednesday.

Sosa hit his seventh home run of the season and first since May 1, a span of 69 at-bats, off Jimmy Haynes in the fifth inning.

Once arguably baseball's most popular slugger, Sosa's homer was greeted with boos from the sellout crowd of 39,053 at the Great American Ballpark. He was also greeted with chants of "Cork!" in his other at-bats.

Sosa was suspended for using a corked bat in a game at Wrigley Field June 2.

Kerry Wood (6-5) pitched a complete game three-hitter for the Cubs, striking out nine and walking none while also driving in a run. Mark Grudzielanek had three hits and drove in a run for Chicago.

Haynes (1-6) allowed four runs on 10 hits in 5 2/3 innings.

Jose Guillen homered for the Reds.

In Pittsburgh, Aramis Ramirez, Kenny Lofton and Reggie Sanders homered to lead the Pirates past the Montreal Expos 7-3 in the first game of a doubleheader.

Jeff D'Amico (5-7) went six innings for the win, allowing two runs on six hits. Mike Williams picked up the last two outs for his 19th save of the season.

Livan Hernandez (6-5) went 4 2/3 innings, giving up six runs on eight hits. Wil Cordero homered for Montreal.

In the nightcap, the Pirates completed the sweep by scoring twice in the bottom of the ninth on a two-run double from Josh Kendall to win 4-3.

Salomon Torres (4-1) allowed one run on one hit in the ninth but still recorded the victory, Pittsburgh's fourth straight.

Rocky Biddle (3-2) gave up two runs on four hits in 1/3 inning as the Expos lost their sixth game in a row. Jose Macias homered for Montreal.

In Milwaukee, Eduardo Perez homered, had three hits and drove in two runs as the St. Louis Cardinals routed the Brewers 9-1.

Albert Pujols had four hits for the Cards, who led 8-0 after two innings. Miguel Cairo had three RBI for St. Louis while Jason Simontacchi allowed one run on seven hits over seven innings for the win.

Glendon Rusch (1-11) was clobbered for eight runs on six hits in one-plus innings. Eddie Perez homered for Milwaukee.

In Miami, Jose Reyes drove in four runs to help the New York Mets past the Florida Marlins 10-5. *Reuters*

MAJOR LEAGUES STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division	W	L
New York	42	29
Boston	40	30
Toronto	40	31
Baltimore	32	36
Tampa Bay	24	46

Central Division	W	L
Minnesota	38	32
Kansas City	36	32
Chicago	33	38
Cleveland	28	41
Detroit	17	51

West Division	W	L
Seattle	48	22
Oakland	40	29
Anaheim	34	35
Texas	27	42

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division	W	L
Atlanta	46	23
Montreal	39	32
Philadelphia	36	33
New York	33	37
Florida	34	39

Central Division	W	L
Chicago	39	31
Houston	38	33
St. Louis	37	33
Cincinnati	35	35
Pittsburgh	29	39
Milwaukee	28	42

West Division	W	L
Los Angeles	42	28
San Francisco	42	28
Colorado	36	37
Arizona	34	36
San Diego	23	50

(NL) Pittsburgh 7, Montreal 3 (1ST GM); Pittsburgh 4, Montreal 3 (2ND GM); Chicago Cubs 4, Cincinnati 1; NY Mets 10, Florida 5; Atlanta 6, Philadelphia 1; Arizona 2, Houston 1; St Louis 9, Milwaukee 1; Colorado 5, San Diego 3; Los Angeles 8, San Francisco 2

(AL) Cleveland 4, Detroit 1; Toronto 6, Baltimore 2; NY Yankees 1, Tampa Bay 0 (12 Innings); Chicago White Sox 3, Boston 1; Kansas City 8, Minnesota 6; Seattle 2, Anaheim 0; Oakland 4, Texas 3

Michael comes to Ralf's aid

FERRARI driver Michael Schumacher (right) shares a laugh with his brother Ralf at the end of the Canadian Grand Prix. REUTERS

BERLIN—Five-time Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher leapt to the defense of his brother Ralf on Wednesday after he was accused of failing to overtake Michael in the Canadian Grand Prix.

Michael won Sunday's race by a fraction of a second after the brothers had been involved in a nose-to-tail battle throughout the 70 laps.

"I do not understand people who cannot see that there was no chance to overtake and that he was wise to act as he did," said Michael on his official website.

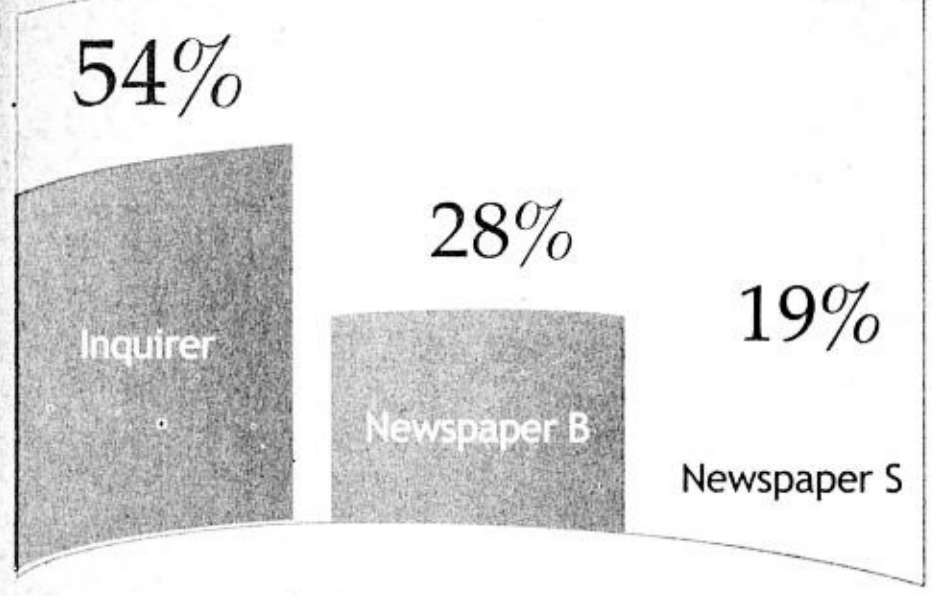
"Of course, I took care at the critical moments where you can overtake in Canada, but I had a sufficient lead over him." Schumacher said his younger brother would have had to drive "like a maniac" to pass him in Montreal.

"Ralf isn't stupid enough to do that," said Michael.

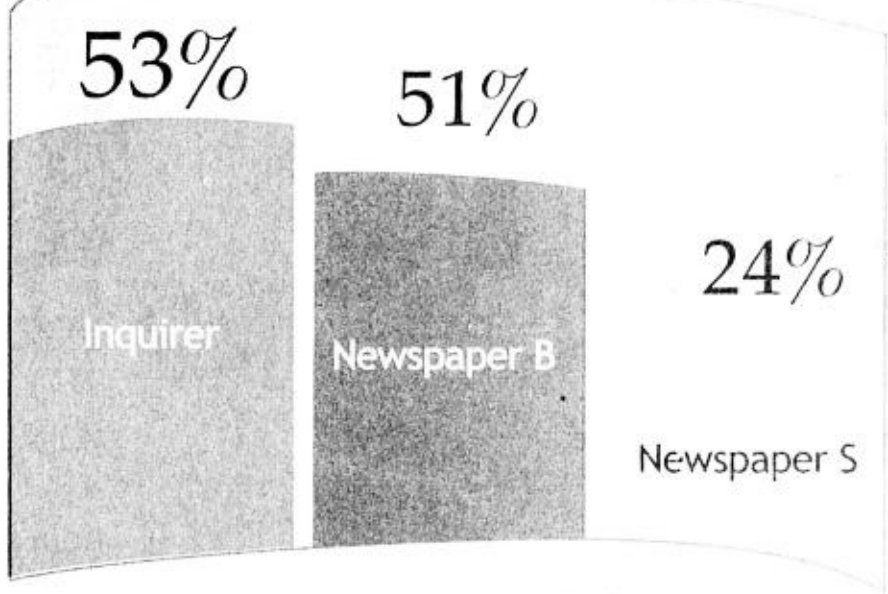
The win took Ferrari ace Michael to the top of the drivers' standings for the first time this season as he goes in search of a sixth title. *AFP*

Different surveys.*
Same result.

Broadsheets read nationwide

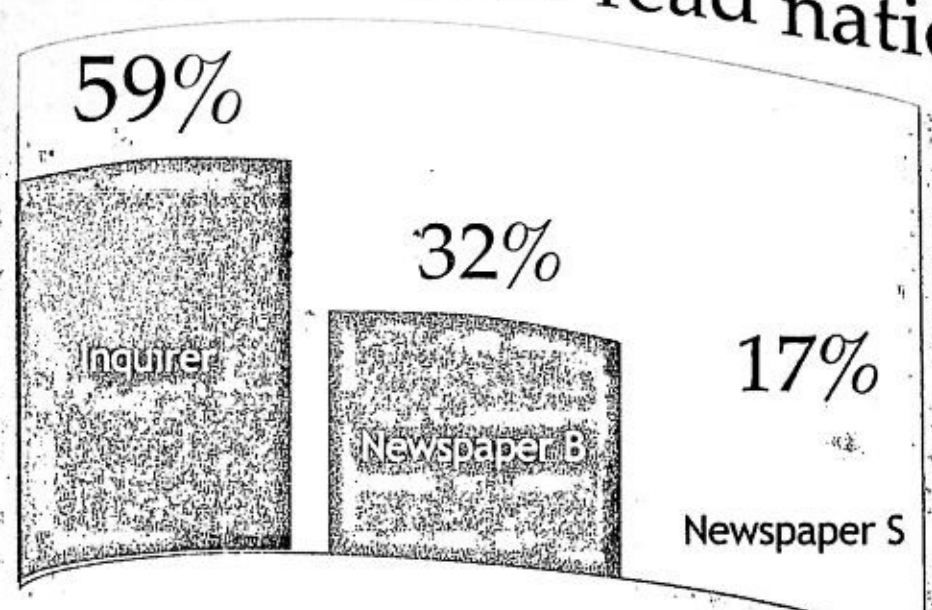


Asia Research Organization

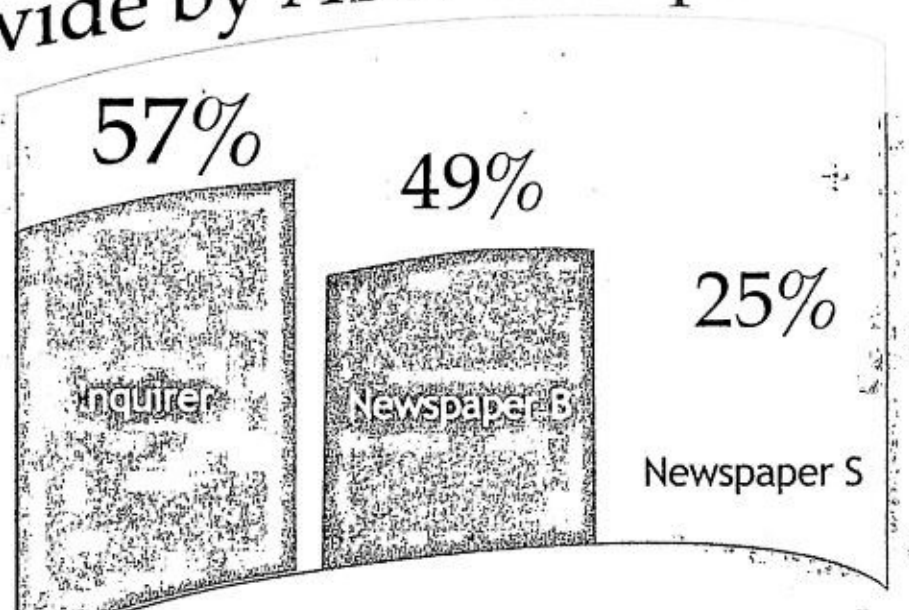


AC Nielsen Media Index

Broadsheets read nationwide by ABC Groups



Asia Research Organization



AC Nielsen Media Index

*Independent surveys conducted by ARO and AC Nielsen in 2002

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Trade deficit widens as exports shrink

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY posted a trade deficit of $488 million in April, wider than the $331-million deficit in March as global demand for its exports shrank, the National Statistics Office announced yesterday.

The figure brought the deficit for the first four months of the year to $1.14 billion, far higher than the $71-million deficit in the same period of 2002.

A bigger trade deficit makes it harder for the Philippines to build up reserves of foreign currency needed to pay for key imported items such as crude oil.

But Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said the decline in imports for raw material was traced mainly to electronics, noting that imports of other raw material components increased.

He said this indicated that the manufacturing sector, excluding the electronics sector, remained active during the period.

"We would have wanted better figures, but our consolation is that the balance of trade deficit improved from last year," Neri said.

Exports slid almost 2 percent in April, registering their first fall since March 2002, while imports fell 7.6 percent, their first decline since February 2002. That brought April's deficit down from a shortfall of $697 million in April 2002.

The April import bill was $3.19 billion, lower than March's $3.42 billion, helped by cheaper oil after the Iraq war started. Exports in April were worth $2.7 billion, slightly lower than the $2.75 billion seen a year earlier.

Jose Vistan, economic analyst at AB Capital, said April imports were lower than he had expected. "This has to do with cautiousness brought by the SARS scare. It slowed down or affected demand."

Import levels are closely monitored by economists as a large proportion of these are needed to manufacture exports such as computer parts and electronic goods.

Accounting for 44.2-percent share of the total import bill, expenditure for electronics significantly dropped to $1.41 billion, 20.8 percent lower than last year's $1.78 billion.

"We will incur a trade deficit this year due to the slowdown in some of our major trading partners. But we expect things to change next year and revert to surplus as some signs of improvement slowly materialize like improving business and consumer confidence," Vistan said.

According to Erico Claudio, research analyst from Unicapital Securities Inc., the 12.6-percent decline in importation of raw materials and intermediate goods, from $1.52 billion last year to $1.33 billion, could mean a slow down in the manufacturing sector. However, he added the decline could also be a mere effect of stockpiling of inventory from the previous months.

He added the January-to-April import figure, which was at $12.34 billion or 13-percent higher than last year's $10.93 billion, was a good reason to remain positive about the local economic activity.

With a report from Reuters

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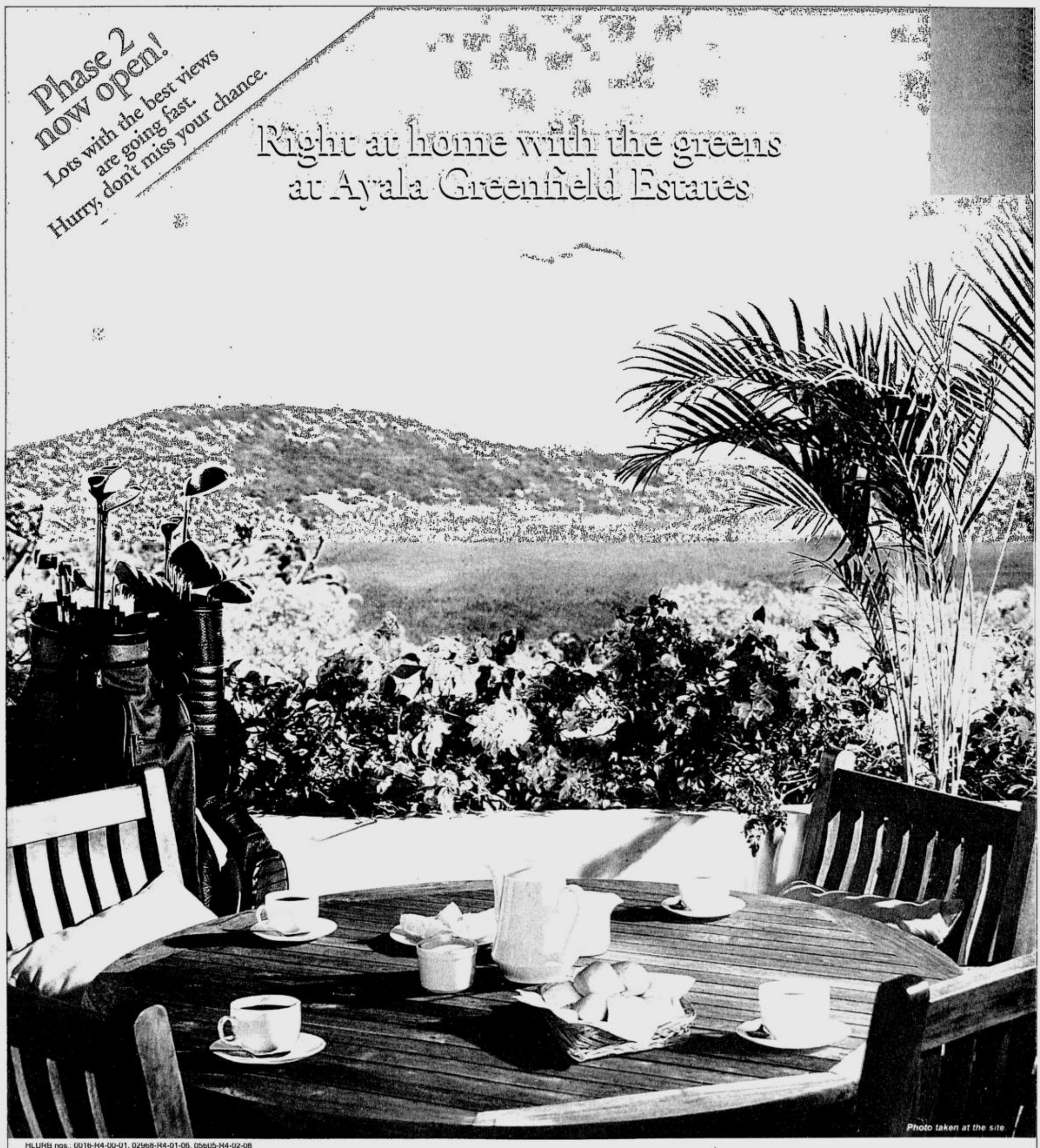

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FOR EXPANSION PROJECTS

BSP OKs $450-M float of PLDT

By Doris C. Dumlao

TELECOMMUNICATION giant Philippine Long Distance and Telephone Co. has obtained approval from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to issue notes worth as much as $450 million for its infrastructure spending.

A monetary official yesterday said the Monetary Board, the BSP's policy-making body, cleared the proposed note issuance during its meeting last June 5.

All foreign borrowings planned by the public or private sector need a clearance from the Monetary Board.

Other banking sources said PLDT might also raise funds locally as the company was encouraged by the market's warm response to its one-year commercial paper issue.

PLDT recently issued P2 billion through a two-tranche, one-year commercial issue. The first tranche, completed in April, raised P1.6 billion at a yield of 11.16 percent while the second tranche of P400 million carried a rate of 10.05 percent.

The sources said PLDT might be keen on issuing peso bonds with a maturity of two or three years to take advantage of the liquidity in the financial system.

The BSP recently revived a tiering system in its overnight borrowing to discourage banks from placing funds in its vaults.

For its part, PLDT plans to use the proceeds from its planned borrowings for the expansion of its mobile and fixed-line network, having programmed a consolidated capital expenditure of P16 billion for this year.

A few days ago, PLDT likewise signed a five-year syndicated loan deal worth 5.62 billion yen, which was backed by Japan's Nippon Export and Investment Insurance.

Smart invests P220M to put up Palawan transmission backbone

By Abigail L. Ho

PUERTO Princesa, Palawan—Cellular giant Smart Communications Inc. has invested about P220 million for the establishment of a transmission backbone facility that will connect the province of Palawan to the rest of the country and the world.

The Palawan Transmission Backbone Facility will enable Palaweños as well as Palawan visitors to make crisp voice calls while enjoying more advanced communications services like picture messaging and mobile Internet, things that cannot be done using existing satellite transmission systems.

Smart's president and chief executive Napoleon Nazareno told reporters at the sidelines of the facility's inauguration ceremonies yesterday that the transmission backbone would spur economic activity and tourism in Palawan.

"The backbone is robust and highly scalable. It can stimulate growth as well as cope with future growth. Most industries here like banks, oil exploration and airlines can use it for uninterrupted data transmission," he said.

Smart is also preparing to invest another P200 million to P300 million to put up 14 cell sites on top of the 16 that are operating in various parts of the province.

Before the new facility was set up, all telecommunications operators in Palawan used satellite-based transmission systems. While these systems were relatively easy to deploy in remote areas, they were also quite expensive to roll out.

Satellite-based systems also suffered from very limited capacity, making them unable to carry a huge amount of data at a particular time.

The new transmission backbone, however, would not only allow users to transmit a larger amount of data at any given time, it would also link Palawan to a greater part of the Philippines and the world.

It will link Puerto Princesa to Batangas via Mindoro using 15 relay stations that span a distance of 617 kilometers.

Eight of the relay stations are located in Batangas-Mindoro while seven are in Palawan, starting at Mt. Tundalara in the northern part of the province and extending as far as Sta. Monica in the south.

"It's a powerful symbol of our new thrust to go to the underserved and remote areas (of the Philippines). This project is part of the company's current thrust to extend advanced and innovative wireless services to more areas of the country," Nazareno said.

RCBC schedules roadshow for P4.5-B offering

By Elena R. Torrijos

RIZAL Commercial Banking Corp., a mid-sized universal bank controlled by the Yuchengco family, will kick off a roadshow for its P4.5 billion tier-2 capital offering on Tuesday in Cebu City and will follow it up with a road show in Manila on Thursday, RCBC corporate vice chair and acting chief executive Cesar Virata said.

Virata said the bank has submitted all the legal documents and requirements to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the tier-2 issue should be completed soon after the monetary authority shall have given its final approval.

The tier-2 capital issue is seen to give RCBC leeway in meeting its growth targets for this year and to provide a buffer to cover for bad assets.

Earlier this month, the BSP relaxed the guidelines governing domestic tier-2 capital raising activities of banks, clearing the roadblock to the P4.5-billion local bond offering RCBC had planned.

For instance, the Monetary Board of the BSP agreed to remove the provision prohibiting the registry bank from acting as the selling agent for the offering.

The Monetary Board also allowed the selling bank's trust department to invest in or purchase the capital notes provided that the funds used were those under a "directed trust" and not a common trust fund (CTF). A directed trust fund means the trustee can immediately authorize the purchases of securities or investments. A CTF refers to funds owned by several clients which are pooled to tap the opportunities available to a much larger fund. RCBC's planned offering is the first tier-2 capital raising activity that will tap the domestic market and will therefore be used as a benchmark for future local issuances.

Bill to restore OBUs' tax exemption

TWO offshore banking units have left the Philippines due to the loss of their tax exemption while more will likely follow for the same reason, Rep. Exequel Javier warned yesterday.

Javier, who was chair of the House committee on ways and means when the comprehensive tax reform law was passed in 1997, said new taxes were erroneously imposed on foreign banks at that time.

Since the 1997 law was passed, OBUs were required to pay the flat 10-percent tax plus all other taxes that local banks pay.

Upon review of the transcript of congressional deliberations, however, Javier said in a statement that there was no legislative intent to change the taxation on OBUs. The "in lieu" portion was erroneously dropped, resulting in the over-taxation of these OBUs, he stressed.

"The loss of tax exemption simply due to an inadvertent omission will render the operations of FCDUs (foreign currency deposit units) and OBUs unsustainable and will have serious economic consequences to the country," Javier said.

Aside from the two OBUs which had so far left the country, Javier said more foreign banks were thinking of following suit. He declined to name the OBUs.

Javier has filed a bill restoring the tax exemption to correct the inadvertent removal of the "in lieu" portion.

"In many instances when the country was accused of changing rules on business, there was intent. In this case, there was none at all and I would like to believe that the omission was inadvertent and not deliberate," he said.

Doris C. Dumlao

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

53.35 =

As of 5 p.m., June 19, 2003

GOLD: $356.50-357.00

per ounce Hong Kong, June 19, 2003

Share prices edge lower

SHARE prices closed fractionally lower yesterday in consolidation after recent gains following a downturn on overseas markets, dealers said.

They said sentiment, however, remained firm on expectations the government would meet this year's fiscal targets due to higher revenue collections and lower expenditures.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 1.21 point or 0.10 percent to 1,251.81.

Volume turnover was higher at 742.08 million shares but value fell to P740.04 million from 600.57 million shares worth P1.08 billion on Wednesday.

"The market is consolidating in line with Wall Street and other markets in the region, but sentiment remains bullish," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com.

AFP

INTEREST RATES

June 19, 2003-MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 19-Jun-03	MART1 18-Jun-03
1 Month	6.3792	6.3833
3 Months	6.4646	6.4812
6 Months	7.3654	7.3615
1 Year	7.5269	7.4981
2 Years	8.4654	8.4846
3 Years	9.4981	9.5058
4 Years	10.0308	10.1058
5 Years	10.4077	10.4769
7 Years	11.2173	11.2942
10 Years	11.5577	11.5808
20 Years	12.05	12.1096
25 Years	12.4538	12.5346

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

CURRENCIES

June 19, 2003

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.854993	1.000000	53.424000
Japan	Yen	0.007257	0.008488	0.453500
United Kingdom	Pound	1.435448	1.678900	89.693600
Hongkong	Dollar	0.109636	0.128230	6.850600
Switzerland	Franc	0.646889	0.756601	40.420700
Canada	Dollar	0.640636	0.749288	40.030000
Singapore	Dollar	0.494073	0.577868	30.872000
Australia	Dollar	0.575404	0.672993	35.954000
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.267946	2.652590	141.712000
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.227992	0.266660	14.246000
Brunei	Dollar	0.492650	0.576203	30.783100
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000104	0.000122	0.006500
Thailand	Baht	0.020557	0.024044	1.284500
UAE	Dirham	0.232784	0.272264	14.545400
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.169600	62.484700
Argentina	Peso	0.306449	0.358423	19.148400
Brazil	Real	0.295948	0.346141	18.492200
Denmark	Kroner	0.134673	0.157513	8.415000
India	Rupee	0.018399	0.021519	1.149600
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.225004	0.263165	14.059300
Mexico	New Peso	0.080606	0.094277	5.036700
New Zealand	Dollar	0.499325	0.584010	31.200200
Norway	Kroner	0.122515	0.143293	7.655300
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014854	0.017373	0.928100
South Africa	Rand	0.107817	0.126103	6.736900
Korea	Won	0.000722	0.000844	0.045100
Sweden	Kroner	0.110487	0.129226	6.903800
Syria	Pound	0.020357	0.023810	1.272000
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024819	0.029028	1.550800
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000536	0.000627	0.033500

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 19, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	15,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	19.75	19.75	18.5	19	769,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	49	49	48	48	1,857,700
China Banking Corp.	715	725	715	725	1,000
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	6,500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	35	36.5	35	36.5	479,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31.5	32	31	31	1,056,800
Philippine National Bank	26	26	25	25	89,000
Phil. Savings Bank	28	28	28	28	2,000
Security Bank Corp.	12.25	13.5	12.25	13.5	799,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	20.25	20.75	20.25	20.75	65,500
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	140,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1525	1525	1525	1525	130
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1100	1110	1100	1110	1,660
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	20.5	20.75	20.25	20.75	50,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0.78	0.81	0.78	0.78	7,360,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	640	645	635	635	179,940
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.045	0.046	0.044	0.044	7,300,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.024	9,700,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	18,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.38	0.43	0.38	0.42	11,310,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.23	420,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	525	535	525	535	84,320
Ivantage Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	20,000
Philweb Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.014	42,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	9.3	10.5	9.3	10	1,936,000
Manila Electric Co. B	15	15.75	15	15.25	2,604,700
Petron Corp.	2.1	2.12	2.04	2.04	7,438,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.62	1.64	1.62	1.62	1,380,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.85	2.95	2.85	2.95	3,598,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	10,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	51,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.48	0.52	0.48	0.5	1,040,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	5,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	300,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31	30.5	31	200,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	216,700
RFM Corp.	0.79	0.8	0.79	0.8	200,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	130,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54	54.5	53.5	54.5	331,600
San Miguel Corp. B	63	63.5	63	63	504,700
Universal Robina Corp.	4.7	4.75	4.7	4.75	120,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	120,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5	5.1	4.95	5	7,181,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.38	2.38	2.36	2.38	188,000
Ajo Net Holdings, Inc.	0.028	0.036	0.028	0.034	67,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	200,000
APC Group Inc.	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.07	9,600,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	11,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.64	1.78	1.6	1.78	1,121,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.17	0.17	0.16	0.16	320,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.49	0.54	0.49	0.53	19,040,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	60,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	100,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.2	2,600,000
DMCI Holdings, Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.245	2,580,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	2,500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.3	1.32	1.24	1.24	1,106,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	11.75	12.75	11.75	12.5	3,063,400
Global Equities Inc.	0.1	0.12	0.1	0.105	3,600,000
Ionics Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.86	0.86	460,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.74	1.74	788,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	3,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.81	0.83	0.78	0.78	2,080,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	50,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.22	0.245	0.22	0.245	17,920,000
Music Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.38	0.38	790,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp	0.05	0.05	0.045	0.045	1,600,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	200,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	10,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.07	0.065	0.07	2,100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.59	0.6	0.59	0.6	160,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	50,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	520,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.82	1.84	1.7	1.74	96,000
Pryce Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	15.75	15.75	15.75	15.75	20,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.54	0.54	0.52	0.53	3,130,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.4	920,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	300,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	370,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	150,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	20.5	21	20.25	21	470,100
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10	10	10	10	2,000
Philweb Corp - Warrants	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	7,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.2	6.3	6.1	6.2	4,172,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	20,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.3	1,700,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	200,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.155	0.155	0.15	0.15	1,740,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.225	10,710,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.08	1.16	1.08	1.14	32,249,000
Kuok Phil Properties	0.15	0.195	0.15	0.17	16,160,000
[illegible] Estate Land Inc	0.2	0.22	0.2	0.205	[illegible]
[illegible] Land Inc.	0.15	0.15	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] Land Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	[illegible]
[illegible] Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] Holdings Inc.	6	6	[illegible]		[illegible]
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co A	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	320,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co B	0.2	0.205	0.195	0.195	1,270,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	42,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	19,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.004	0.0044	0.004	0.0044	219,000,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	14,500,000
Interport Res.	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	3,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0028	0.0032	0.0028	0.0028	13,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	14,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.17	370,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.17	590,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	49,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.027	6,000,000

DISCLOSURES

BANK of the Philippine Islands declared a regular cash dividend of P0.80 per share.

* * *

ELECTED directors of Fortune Cement Corp. were Renato Sunico, Edgardo Soriano, Juan Miguel Montinola, Romeo Versula, Sherman Yap, Bi Yong Chungunco and Cristina Bernardino. Also, appointed members of the nomination committee were Bernardino, Sunico and Soriano.

* * *

EMPIRE East Land Holdings Inc. announced the appointment of Ricardo Gregorio as vice president for human resources general and administrative services.

* * *

ALLIANCE Global Group Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Aug. 29, 9 a.m. at The Richmonde Hotel, Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of July 9 will be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

APPOINTED members of Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.'s nomination committee were Wigberto Tañada, Andres Sta. Maria and Bryan Cockrell.

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Taxing times

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

INTERNAL Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno has found out the whys and wherefores of a controversial BIR ruling that exempted the Honda CR-V from the excise tax and reclassified the hot-selling SUV into a 10-seater AUV like the Toyota Revo and Mitsubishi Adventure.

According to the grapevine, it was then Assistant Commissioner Edwin Abella who signed the controversial February 2002 ruling that effectively gave Honda CR-V the tax boost.

What needs to be explained publicly is why then BIR Commissioner Rene Bañez or his three deputy commissioners allowed a third-liner to sign and issue a multibillion-peso ruling when all four of them were very much around.

Stranger still, the Senate resolution seeking an inquiry into the Honda CR-V exemption was filed by Sen. Loi Ejercito despite the fact that Abella has a direct line to opposition leader and staunch Erap ally Juan Ponce Enrile.

With the assumption of Parayno, Abella has been relegated to a lower position pending the outcome of a personnel audit of the bureau.

Bañez, on the other hand, has been quietly retained as a consultant of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho on the proposed BIR privatization, with the dollar-denominated Bañez consultancy being financed by a generous grant from the USAID's Agile program.

Accounting tricks

FINANCE Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho was being parsimonious with the facts when he conducted a press briefing Wednesday on the government uncovering another syndicate passing off spurious tax credit certificates.

According to the grapevine, the investigation has already pinpointed the connivance of several partners of a large accounting firm with the syndicate, whose modus operandi revolved around the multiple uses of what were supposed to have been one-time-use tax credit certificates.

The certificates have varying multimillion-peso face values.

What the DOF is trying to find out now is whether the accounting tricksters did it on their own or in connivance with their firm.

The accounting firm's defense, incidentally, is that it was merely a broker, a go-between like investment houses and financial intermediaries, of the tax credit certificates.

Protocol vs. publisher

IT'S time Presidential Adviser Roberto Romulo touched base with ex-Ambassador Jose Zaldarriaga and exchanged diplomatic notes on how to neutralize Favorite Publisher and his surrogate columnists.

Like Romulo now, Zaldarriaga was mercilessly attacked through ad hominems and outright fictional accounts by the same Favorite Publisher when Zaldarriaga was still the country's envoy to Italy.

One particular swipe that Zaldarriaga could not forget was when Favorite Publisher attacked Zaldarriaga for meeting with a ranking communist in Italy. This was during the Cory years when leftist leaders were being hunted down by rightists.

What Favorite Publisher conveniently omitted in his attack against Zaldarriaga was that the Italian communist happened to be the mayor of the city that Zaldarriaga had to visit. Naturally, Zaldarriaga had no choice but to call on and meet with the communist.

To make a long story short, Zaldarriaga finally stopped Favorite Publisher dead in his tracks after Zaldarriaga showed him what hitherto had been private communication.

If the Zaldarriaga solution has lost its potency by now, we suggest that Romulo should take hold of the rectangular pieces of paper that Rep. Mark Jimenez was showing his friends after MJ and Favorite Publisher had a famous falling out.

Let us see who will twist in the wind this time.

Heard through the grapevine

THE ITALIANNI'S food server in Glorietta 4 who this column reported Wednesday as the victim of sexual harassment by an "aging journalist" (my original description was changed on advice of our lawyer) happens to be a niece of INQUIRER editor-in-chief Leticia Jimenez-Magsanoc.

The senior citizen, by the way, was in Cebu over the Independence Day weekend, trotting out another juvenile hot tamale in the Waterfront Hotel and the local Ayala Center despite his published avowals of love and devotion to his precious wife.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

JANUARY-MAY

Budget gap below target

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has kept in check the budget deficit in the first 5 months this year due to reforms in tax administration and cutbacks in government spending particularly on infrastructure.

In a press conference at Malacañang, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho reported that the budget deficit—the difference between government earnings and expenses—hit P75.4 billion from January to May this year or 14 percent below the 5-month target of P87.4 billion.

Revenue collections in the first 5 months hit P257.4 billion or 6 percent over the P242-billion target while expenditures were kept at P332.7 billion or one percent ahead of the P329.5-billion target.

The restrained budget gap was a result of the efforts by the bureaus of internal revenue and of customs to crack down on tax cheats and smugglers nationwide and plug the loopholes. Camacho said the BIR (with collections up 15 percent to P257.38 billion in the first five months) and the BOC (up 19 percent to P43.72 billion) have improved their performance since the President took a direct hand in their operations since the third quarter of last year.

"I believe we are getting the message across that taxation is every citizen's concern it is an investment in our collective future based on the positive response we have been getting," Camacho said.

But behind the increase in revenue collections was the significant drop in government spending specifically on capital outlays (down 26 percent to P44.53 billion in the first five months this year) and infrastructure (down 34 percent to P30.68 billion).

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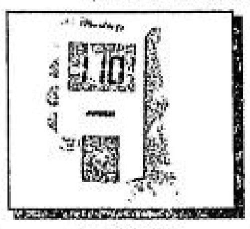
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week June 17, 2003	Last Week June 10, 2003
Bond Fund - Peso	1.08961	1.09633
Managed Fund - Peso	1.10037	1.08414
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.01650	1.01600

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds / Ie insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission

DOUBLE CHECK DIABETES
(SIMPLY AND ACCURATELY)



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NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting of the Company will be held on July 16, 2003 at 9:00 in the morning at Valle Verde Country Club, Capt. Javier St., Bo. Ugong, Pasig City to consider and take action upon the following matters:

1. Call to order;
2. Proof of Notice and Quorum;
3. Approval of the Minutes of the Stockholders Meeting held on July 31, 2002;
4. Report of the President;
5. Presentation and approval of the Financial Statements as of December 31, 2002 embodied in the 2002 Annual Report;
6. Ratification of the acts of directors, committees and officers of the corporation;
7. Appointment of external auditors;
8. Election of directors;
9. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting;
10. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record as of the close of business on May 30, 2003 will be entitled to attend and vote. Stockholders who cannot attend the meeting in person are requested to accomplish the attached proxy form and promptly return the same to the undersigned at least three (3) days before the scheduled time of the meeting.

A copy of SEC Form 17-A (Annual Report) of the Company will be provided free of charge upon written request addressed to:

ATTY. CLARENCE D. GUERRERO
Assistant Corporate Secretary
Apex Mining Co., Inc.
6th Floor Manilabank Bldg.,
Ayala Avenue, Makati City

Makati City, June 2003.

By Order of the Board of Directors

LEONARDO S. GAYAO
Corporate Secretary

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S40 T4	P1,930,000	50%	0%	12 months
V40 T4	P1,975,000	50%	0%	12 months

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MON. - FRI. (8 AM - 7 PM) / SATURDAY (8 AM - 3 PM)

A gov't roadmap to fiscal deliverance

By Jose Isidro N. Camacho
Secretary of Finance

(First of two parts)

PERSPECTIVE

SURELY the following figures were clear trends that should have been enough to intimidate anybody from aspiring for the position of secretary of finance.

In 1994, the total revenue of the national government as a percentage of GDP was 19.9 percent. By 2002, this had dropped to an alarming 14.5 percent. Our tax revenue-to-GDP ratio was 17 percent in 1997 declining to 12.5 percent by 2002. The Bureau of Internal Revenue's collections as a percentage of GDP was a high of 13 percent in 1997 (from 9.9 percent in 1992) going down again to 9.9 percent in 2002 while the Bureau of Custom's revenues registered 5.6 percent of GDP in 1993 down to 2.4 percent by 2002. The fiscal position was a surplus of 1 percent to GDP in 1994 deteriorating to last year's 5.3-percent deficit.

Yet, I readily accepted President Macapagal-Arroyo's offer for me to take on the position of secretary of finance.

With my mathematics degree from the De La Salle University, my MBA from Harvard University, my more than 22 years of experience in international investment banking in five different global financial centers and three brief but fruitful months as secretary of energy, I was beaming with confidence. I could not have prepared myself better for the position I had then just accepted. Oh boy, was I so wrong. I did not expect the rude realization of our fiscal challenge that came a year later.

In the beginning

When I became secretary of finance in June 2001, the government had projected a fiscal deficit of P145 billion, tax revenues of P519.6 (14.2 percent of GDP) and expenditures of P713.2 (19.5 percent of GDP). The financial markets, many analysts and even multilateral institutions were skeptical and there were concerns of the fiscal deficit ballooning to P250 billion for the year. They were obviously looking at the deteriorating trends in the past four to five years and at the new administration and untested economic team of President Macapagal.

Indeed in June 2001, the year-to-date deficit had already reached P79.6 billion while the BIR and the BOC were both lagging in their targets. However, we were undeterred and with the President's strong commitment to fiscal discipline as one of the pillars of our economic program, we did manage to achieve our fiscal target registering a deficit of P147 billion, arrest the accelerating decline of tax revenues-to-GDP, and slightly improve the fiscal deficit-to-GDP ratio from 4.1 percent in 2000 to 4.0 percent in 2001.

This was a great achievement, applauded by the financial markets and the business community. It greatly improved the new government's credibility especially in economic management. Together with the fiscal achievement, our macroeconomic environment stabilized with a tamed inflation rate, historic low interest rates, stable foreign exchange and a respectable economic growth of 3.2 percent in GDP amid the global slowdown that saw our exports decline by 15.57 percent during the year, and a world threatened by global terrorism.

Annus horribilis

Year 2002 began with the economic team believing that we had to achieve our fiscal deficit target of P130 billion or 3.3 percent of GDP to achieve a fiscal balance by 2006 and demonstrate our commitment to fiscal discipline. By June 2002, we had fallen so far behind the target with a fiscal deficit of P119.7 billion and BIR/BOC revenues of P233.5 billion versus their half year target of P276.1 billion. We stubbornly held on to our targets, hoping that the two agencies, especially the BIR, would recover and expenditures would get back under control.

We also wanted to keep the pressure up on all of us, as revising the target might make the government agencies complacent on both revenue generation and expenditure control. By the third quarter, it was clearly all over and it was time to raise the white flag. Not only were we going to miss our target but we would do it by a mile. Much of our time was spent explaining how 2002 could have gone so wrong especially in comparison to 2001.

Indeed, we improved our revenue collections towards the end of the third quarter but too much ground had been lost. To compound our situation, our efforts to improve project implementation much to the satisfaction of our ODA (official development assistance) donors backfired on our expenditures.

The conversion of "Notices of Cash Allocation (NCA)" into actual cash expenditures increased from 85 percent to more than 95 percent, which reflected well on our ability to move projects and programs forward but significantly underestimated actual expenditures.

Dec. 31, 2002 finally came and my annus horribilis was finally over.

Cause for reflection

Eating humble pie has a way of opening one's eyes and calling for deeper reflection. With all our experience, competence, hard work and sincerity, how could we have been so wrong? Why did our tax effort falter again? Why did the fiscal deficit get to this level in absolute terms and as a percentage of GDP? If we are to regain ground on our fiscal program, we needed to know how we lost it in the first place. If we lost on the way, we needed to retrace our path to bring us back on track.

Finding our way back

Looking back over the last 10 years that saw the fiscal deterioration, a number of policy directions and external events had very profound impact on our fiscal performance bringing us inevitably to where we are today.

On the revenue side, the following happened:

At the start of the 1990s, the Philippines took a lead in trade liberalization and reduced tariffs at a pace even faster than our international commitments under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Asean Free Trade Area (Afta).

In our analysis, the tariff reduction program over the last decade eroded our revenue—to-GDP position by as much as 4 percent of GDP. The BOC's revenue-to-GDP position declined from 5.6 percent of GDP in 1993 to last year's 2.4 percent. From early to mid-1990s, we aggressively provided fiscal incentives to promote investments and trade not to mention those given to numerous special-interest groups and sectors. This reduced tax revenue-to-GDP by about 1 percent of GDP.

To further boost the economy, several tax reform measures were legislated during the last decade. These included the reduction of the income tax rate from a minimum of 35 percent to 32 percent and the imposition of specific taxes without indexation on tobacco, alcohol and petroleum products. Several revenue-generating measures were also deferred or not implemented such as the VAT on professional services and limits on certain deductible expenses. All told, the various components of the comprehensive tax reform program of the 1990s probably resulted in revenue loss equivalent to more than 1 percent of GDP.

'97 Asian financial crisis

The above policy directions were intended to induce economic growth and, perhaps, it did accomplish that as the Philippines suffered less than its neighbors from the impact of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, with the GDP in the last 10 years growing at 3.2 to 6 percent except for the 0.5 percent decline in 1998.

It was also expected that the fiscal revenues forgone from these policies will be recovered in future years from the more robust economic growth. Unfortunately for the Philippines, the expected harvest of the fruits of the seeds of incentives and tariff reductions that were planted in the 1990s was aborted by the storm of the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

THE PRESIDENT and her team

The 1997 crisis did not only prevent the fiscal harvest, it also damaged the existing tax revenue base. Corporate taxes declined from 3.4 percent of GDP in 1997 to 2.5 percent in 2002, with the financial sector alone reducing its tax contribution by 0.6 percent of GDP during this period.

Privatization was also a big contributor of revenue in the mid-1990s when we still had all the national jewels to be privatized and markets everywhere were still hot. At its peak in 1994, the government's privatization program generated as much as 1.8 percent of GDP. Clearly, we would not be able to regenerate the good assets for privatization and it would take a while for the global markets to recover.

On the expenditure side, a number of events also happened over the decade to erode our present fiscal situation.

In 1991, Congress enacted the Local Government Code that mandated the increase of the LGU share (also known as IRA) from 20 percent to 40 percent over three years. The idea was to devolve a number of national government functions such as health environment and natural resources, public works to the LGUs. Over the last 10 years, IRA to GDP increased from 1.5 percent in 1992 to 3.5 percent in 2002 or an increment of 2 percent of GDP.

Aside from the Local Government Code, many other expenditure legislation were also enacted by Congress over the years without matching revenue measures. These included the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997, Investors and Incentives Act of the Philippines, Philippine National Police Reform and Reorganization Act of 1998, Family Court Act of 1997, RA 9166 (an Act promoting the Welfare of the AFP by increasing the rate of base pay and other benefits of the Officers and employed personnel) and for other purposes, which resulted in additional expenditures equivalent to approximately 1.7 percent of GDP today.

Double whammy

The 1997 crisis was a double whammy. Aside from eroding the tax base, it also contributed to the increase in our servicing requirement for foreign currency-denominated public debt due to the peso depreciation from 26 to the dollar in 1997 to today's 52-53 to the dollar.

In interest payments alone, this increased our budgeted interest expenses by 0.3 percent of GDP. This also bloated the level of our public debt in absolute number and as a percentage of the GDP.

Other factors putting pressure on expenditures today include the debt servicing of assumed obligations from the restructuring of PNB, DBP and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (formerly Central Bank of the Philippines), the realization of contingent liabilities entered into in the past, and the build-up of national government accounts payable because of the pump-priming activities during the previous administration (e.g. AP's to LGU's).

How bad could it have been?

Given the above factors that eroded our revenues and added to our expenditures, it is a wonder that our fiscal deficit is only 5.3 percent of GDP and that revenues eroded by only as much. Everything else being equal, the fiscal deficit should have widened even more.

Expenditure compensation helped keep the deficit lower than what could have been expected. The capital outlay of the national government was reduced from 4 percent of GDP in 1997 to 2. 6 percent last year. Even personal services declined from 7.4 percent in 1998 to 6.7 percent in 2002 while maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE's) went down slightly from 2.4 percent to 2.1 percent of GDP in recent years. Believe it or not, it may even be possible that tax administration improved during this period.

Some said we were borrowing too much as if it were our solution to our fiscal problems. Nothing can be farther from the truth. It is a fact that our level of public debt is higher than what we want in absolute terms or relative to the GDP and the national revenue. Our relatively long average maturity (19 years for our external debt) and the absence of the bunching up of the debts' maturity somehow mitigated the risk of a debt crisis. Unless we can reverse the trend of our fiscal deficit, however, the risk will become greater.

The act of borrowing, however, is not the problem but the symptom of the real problem, which is our deteriorating fiscal situation. We decide on our expenditures, we try our best efforts on revenue collection, and the difference (i.e. deficit) is what we have to borrow.

If we have to borrow, which for now we have to, we should do it wisely and efficiently, ensuring that we have access to financing when needed at the cheapest cost possible and with longer maturity. This, I am sure, we have achieved. The solution, therefore, goes back to addressing our fiscal deficit problem and not criticizing our borrowing program.

Is a debt cap legislation the answer to our fiscal deficit problem? It can be one of the elements of the package of measures but only if it is so structured to mandate Congress and the executive branch to pass revenue or tax measures and control expenditures when such debt limits are threatened of being breached. It can only aggravate the problem if all it becomes is a hindrance to our day-to-day management of borrowings for that can make us less efficient to respond to market risks and opportunities.

(To be continued)

Neda seeks lowering of '03 inflation target

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority said it would discuss with the Development Budget Coordinating Committee the possibility of lowering the full-year inflation target of 4.5-5.5 percent to 3-3.5 percent.

The Neda adopted this position as the increase in consumer prices in the first five months of the year turned out to be significantly lower than expected.

The inflation rate from January to May stood at an average of 2.84 percent. The highest inflation rate this year was recorded in February at 3.1 percent.

Economic Planning Secretary and Neda Director General Romulo Neri said a reduction in the inflation target for the year was appropriate since the 4.5-5.5 range had factored in the expected effects of the US-Iraq war on oil prices and on the economy, as a whole, but this was no longer a consideration now since the war lasted earlier than expected.

In the past months, a series of oil price reductions in the foreign market contributed to the benign increase in consumer prices.

Neri, however, said the Neda would consult first with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas before proposing a revision in theinflation target,

PDIC to try outsourcing

STATE-OWNED Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. plans to accelerate the disposal of more than 400 banks under its wing by farming out certain liquidation and receivership functions to third parties.

In an interview yesterday at PDIC's 40th anniversary celebration, PDIC president Ricardo Tan said the government financial institution was planning to try the outsourcing program initially on five banks.

PDIC may choose for the initial implementation of the program the last five banks closed down by the government.

PDIC executive vice president Rosalinda Casiguran said the assets of the five banks would amount to at least P50 million.

If successful, Tan said the program could be a template that other government agencies could use.

The PDIC web site showed that as of Sept. 6 last year, the state agency had under liquidation two commercial banks, 49 thrift banks and 353 rural banks. There are also three thrift banks and nine rural banks under receivership.

Most of these banks were inherited by the PDIC from the old central bank. Most of the closed banks' assets consisted of residential properties. *Elena R. Torrijos*

More support services for agrarian reform

By Ernesto M. Ordonez

COMMENTARY

THE ULTIMATE objective of agrarian reform is not giving land to landless farmers but improving the quality of their lives. If this is not achieved, adjustments should immediately be made to our agrarian reform program.

Tito Muñoz, a successful real estate businessman, had just come from the wake of his best friend, Agustin Uriarte, who had been killed in Negros. He saw how the farmers that Mr. Uriarte had helped with farm support services came in droves to show their love and respect for him during his wake. During the eulogy, the priest said the self-confessed killer had harmed not only Mr. Uriarte, but also the several farmers and their families whom Mr. Uriarte had helped. In this remote prosperous farm area in Negros, Mr. Uriarte provided the farm support services that the government could not provide.

On the way back to Manila, Mr. Muñoz observed that well-cultivated lands lay side by side with barren lands in the same kind of terrain. He was told that it was usually landlords with support services that owned the cultivated lands. The barren lands were owned by agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARB's) who were not getting the same kind of support services.

The difference

After land reform, the support services from the landlords stopped because these were supposed to be provided by government. Lani Francia of Task Force Mapalad, an organization of ARBs based in Negros, said: "When we asked for these services from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), they said they did not have enough resources, and that we should instead go to the Department of Agriculture (DA)". However, the DA also did not have the resources to provide for these services at the same pace as land was being distributed. In these places, the farmers are worse off than before land reform.

A study released by former Economic Planning Secretary Cielito Habito showed that in agrarian reform communities where government provided support services, the farmers' income and quality of life improved. A logical conclusion is that land should be distributed only if the government would provide the necessary services.

It is in this context that we must view the farmland as collateral bill now being deliberated in the Senate. Though there are different versions of the bill, most seek to allow ARBs to mortgage their rights to their lands as a form of collateral. This is so they will be able to secure loans from banks and other financial institutions, which usually require collateral. The intention is to help provide the beneficiaries access to credit.

Farmland as collateral

In supporting this bill, Agrarian Reform Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan said: "We want to provide farmers access to legitimate credit and prevent them from depending on usurers who lend money at excessive interest rates."

Presidential Adviser on Agriculture Modernization Angelito Sarmiento said that with more credit, increased rural incomes as well as agriculture modernization would take place. Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. pointed out that enabling the consolidation of lands would allow economies of scale.

Vicente Fabe, Agriwatch vice chair and chair of Pakisama, the largest registered national peasant organization, agrees with the principles advocated by the three secretaries. However, he believes that these principles are better served in ways other than the proposed farmland as collateral bill. He said: "The main solution is to provide government support services to make the ARBs bankable. Banks and financial institutions can then extend credit to the ARBs with collateral substitutes such as guarantee schemes, group risk/lending similar to the Grameen model of rural financing, and percentage of produce collection mechanisms. This will avoid farmers having to risk their property rights and only source of livelihood. Economies of scale can be achieved by consolidating farm operations instead of ownership, as is done in countries like South Korea with much success".

In a position paper, Eugene Tecson of the Philippine Peasant Institute said there was no denying that the acceptance of farm lands as loan collateral, assuming that the property rights of the ARBs have been secured and they are bankable and credit worthy, would be a viable option. However, the great majority of the ARBs are not yet bankable because of lack of support services. Most are already in debt from other sources. It is therefore likely that they will default on their loan repayments and lose both their land as well as their only source of livelihood.

Recommendation

It is recommended that land as collateral should be allowed only in the appropriate situation. The ARBs who have completed their loan amortization, have the necessary support services, and are already bankable should be able to offer their land as collateral. But for the great majority of the ARBs who are not in this category, government-provided support services, alternative collateral schemes, and consolidation of operations for economies of scale should be the solution. This will avoid the cases of barren land owned by agrarian reform beneficiaries with no support services, as was cited earlier in the Negros example. The land-as-collateral solution will be a disaster for this type of farmer. For it will only result in the further deterioration of the quality of his life and an ironic reversal of land reform.

(The author is chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative, former Undersecretary of DA and the DTI and chair/secretary, Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries ort suggestions. e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635)

US recession not yet officially over, panel says

WASHINGTON—More than two years after the US economy slipped into recession, it is not yet clear whether the downturn is over, the economic panel seen as the authority of business cycles said Wednesday.

Although the economy has been growing for the past six quarters, the National Bureau of Economic Research—the widely recognized arbiter of business cycles—said it was not yet prepared to call an end to the recession that began in March 2001.

Many economists define a recession as two consecutive quarters of shrinking gross domestic product (GDP).

But the NBER said other factors must be considered as well including employment, industrial output, wholesale and retail sales and income.

"Because of the divergent behavior of various indicators, the NBER's Business Cycle Dating Committee believes that additional time is needed before interpreting the movements of the economy over the past two years," the panel said in a statement.

While GDP, income and sales have been growing over the past year, employment is still declining and production has grown at a sluggish pace.

Most economists consider the latest recession shallow by historical standards but note that the apparent recovery in the past year has been remarkably devoid of jobs growth.

The committee said it would determine the end of the recession "when it concludes that a subsequent downturn would be a separate recession, not a continuation of the recession that began in March 2001, and has sufficient information to identify the month of the trough."

It is not unusual to see a lag in the time needed to determine the start or end of a recession, NBER noted.

For example, the committee waited until December 1992 to announce that a trough had occurred in March 1991.

According to official government figures, the US economy plodded ahead at a 1.9 percent growth rate in the first quarter of 2003.

The tepid pace in the January-March period was only a marginal improvement from the 1.4 percent rate of the fourth quarter of 2003. *AFP*

US PRESIDENT George W. Bush (fourth, from left) answers questions during a bipartisan meeting with members of the US Congress in the White House on Wednesday. Bush is urging Congress to pass legislation to stimulate the economy. AFP

Asian ministers gather to discuss Asian Bond Fund

BANGKOK—Ministers from 18 Asian nations will meet in northern Thailand from Friday for talks expected to focus on the $1-billion Asian Bond Fund, an initiative of Thai premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

The three-day Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), in its second year, will be held in the northern city of Chiang Mai and hosted by Thaksin, the forum's founder.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and South Korean Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan are confirmed as attending, along with mainly foreign ministers from India, Pakistan, Japan, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Qatar and 10 Southeast Asian states.

"The Asian Bond Fund is one of the very important issues to be taken up there," deputy foreign ministry spokesman Itti Ditbanjong told AFP, adding that the Chiang Mai Declaration on development of the fund will be issued Sunday.

On June 2 Thaksin announced the highly anticipated issue, under which 11 Asian economies will focus on investing in regional government bonds.

Itti said other countries could enter into the scheme during the ACD.

Kuwait, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan and Oman are reportedly interested in joining the fund, which already has commitments from Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand.

Thaksin has said he wants the fund to promote regional financial stability and minimize the risk of a repeat of the 1997-98 Asian economic crisis.

International credit agency Standard and Poor's last week said the Asian Bond Fund would raise cooperation among the region's monetary authorities and develop Asia's capital markets.

Central banks in Japan, the Philippines and Singapore have announced separately that they will each provide $100 million to the fund. *AFP*

US firms blame war, SARS for woes

NEW YORK—It is beginning to feel like the gods are frowning on US businesses. Companies are citing war, disease and bad weather as reasons why their second-quarter earnings will fall short.

But investors and stock market strategists are not convinced that a plague has hit Wall Street, though some question whether optimism for an economic recovery came too soon.

In a climate of closer shareholder scrutiny, companies may just be using the elements and world events as excuses for their own mistakes.

"They tend to put the blame for earnings disappointments wherever they can," said Alan Ackerman, global market strategist at Fahnestock & Co. The bad news has cut across sectors, from cellular phone producers hit by the respiratory ailment SARS to sandal-makers and charcoal-sellers soaked by unseasonably heavy rainfall.

In the latest wave of announcements—during what is often termed the corporate "confessional" period close to a quarter's end—photographic film producer Eastman Kodak slashed its earnings forecast by more than half.

The New York Times Co. also provided a broad range of reasons when it announced profits would fall short, including higher costs from covering the war in Iraq, a drop in travel-related advertising due to SARS, and weak US economics affecting the retail and job markets.

Clorox Co. attributed its slightly dimmer outlook to an unusually wet spring season that has cut demand for its charcoal and auto products.

Payless ShoeSource Inc. also blamed an expected drop in profits on the rain that dampened sales of sandals.

Last week, companies such as Motorola Inc., the world's No. 2 mobile phone company, and Texas Instruments also issued SARS-related earnings warnings.

Investors said that in some cases, longer-term problems were being masked.

"People are using SARS to hide behind," said Henry Asher, president of money-management firm Northstar Group.

For example, increasing competition from Chinese rivals is likely to threaten Motorola more than a potentially temporary hit from SARS. And Payless may have lost out this season with a weaker fashion selection than rival shoe retailers.

But in a sign that investors' overall optimism is not yet badly dented, the broader stock market was little changed, with the Standard & Poor's 500 Index nearly flat at 1,010.09.

"The overall market itself has such momentum it's not likely that we're going to see a huge tumble over a couple of companies," said Paul Cherney, chief market analyst at S&P MarketScope.

Of 831 companies that have issued second-quarter forecasts, 51 percent predicted disappointing results and 26 percent gave positive guidance. The ratio of negative to positive, 2 to 1, is in line with the historical average, he said. *Reuters*

China-Asean free trade area plan on track; ready by 2010

PHNOM PENH—Plans for a free trade area linking the world's most populous nation and Southeast Asia by 2010 are on track, with China confident tariffs on a range of products will be dismantled long before then.

"There should be no problems (reaching that target date)," Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said in the Cambodian capital, where the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) is hosting a series of regional meetings.

"Initially, Asean had some misgivings, but now they feel this is very beneficial to Asean." The pact, proposed by China's former economic czar ex-premier Zhu Rongji and endorsed by Asean in 2001, will create the world's largest free trade area (FTA) covering 1.7 billion people.

Tariff-slashing details under the FTA plan are expected to feature in discussions when Asean foreign ministers meet their Chinese counterpart Li Zhaoxing Thursday.

With a combined market of 1.7 billion people, an Asean-China free trade area would have a gross domestic product of $2 trillion and two-way trade of $1.23 trillion, according to estimates from Asean and China.

The establishment of an FTA is expected to result in a surge of nearly 50 percent in exports from both sides.

The average duty within an Asean-China FTA by 2010 would vary between zero and 5 percent. Most investment barriers would also be eliminated.

Asean comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Japan, China's economic competitor in the region, is meanwhile trying to ink free trade pacts with Southeast Asian countries but is faced with opposition from its domestic farm interests. *AFP*

Oracle boosts PeopleSoft bid

REDWOOD SHORES, California—Business software giant Oracle Corp. on Wednesday ramped up a hostile takeover bid for rival PeopleSoft by $1.2 billion, to $6.3 billion.

Oracle also announced it would sue PeopleSoft, accusing its board of failing to act in the shareholders' best interest and demanding it remove a "poison pill" obstructing the acquisition.

Authorities in Connecticut, meanwhile, said they would sue Oracle to halt the takeover bid on antitrust grounds. PeopleSoft has already launched legal action against Oracle.

The clash between Oracle and PeopleSoft is shaping up as the most acrimonious, bitterly fought takeover battle in the technology world since the Internet bubble burst three years ago.

Oracle increased its bid to $19.50 a share from the initial offer of $16, two days after PeopleSoft rejected the bid and reaffirmed plans to merge with rival business software group J.D. Edwards.

PeopleSoft issued a statement advising its shareholders to take no action until it had time to study the revised offer.

On Monday, PeopleSoft announced it was speeding up its plans for a $1.75-billion, friendly takeover of J.D. Edwards.

It threw in $850 million cash as part of the formerly all-stock offer and removed the need for a vote by PeopleSoft shareholders so long as 90 percent of the J.D. Edwards stock is acquired.

Oracle said it was filing suit in Delaware against PeopleSoft, its board of directors and J.D. Edwards for trying to remove PeopleSoft's shareholders' ability to accept its takeover offer. *AFP*

GE union leaders OK labor deal

NEW YORK—Diversified industrial group General Electric Co. took a step toward better ties with its workers on Wednesday as senior members of its biggest union approved a tentative four-year labor contract.

The International Union of Electronic Workers-Communications Workers of America (IUE-CWA), which covers around 13,000 workers, said local leaders across the nation would present the proposals to members who are expected to vote on them by June 24.

The proposals hammered out on Sunday would cover GE's 24,000 unionized workers as well as other non-union members. They include a smaller rise in real wages compared to the previous contract but keep company healthcare contributions at existing levels.

The proposed contract translates into a total compensation bill for GE of $1.7 billion for its 150,000 US-based employees.

In a press statement, the union confirmed that GE has agreed to maintain its contribution toward healthcare costs at 82 percent, with employees paying the rest.

GE had sought to provide less than that, citing what it says is a standard industry contribution rate of 70 percent.

Around 17,000 GE workers went on a two-day strike in January as the company pushed for reduced benefits in the face of a sluggish economy that has been eating into corporate America's profits over the last two years.

IUE-CWA said GE had proposed giving four real wage increments and eight cost-of-living increases for a cumulative 16.5 percent increase in pay over the next four years.

The wage rise over four years without the cost-of-living adjustments stands at 11.6 percent on a compound basis, down from 14 percent in the previous three-year contract.

If the deal is approved it will help GE avert a potential strike and serve as a guide for contract talks at other manufacturers. *Reuters*

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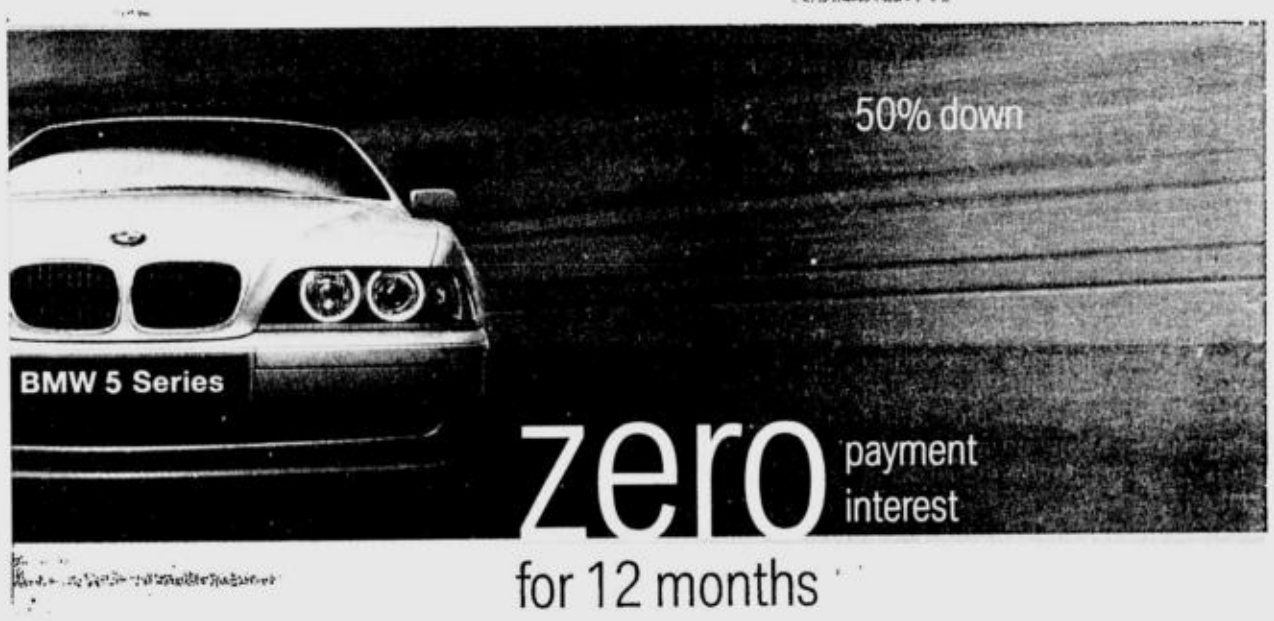

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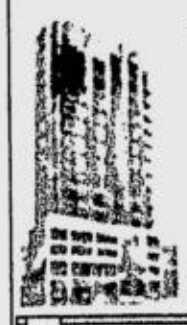

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nr Ateneo 1BR grg 7T 6819583

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QUEZON CITY

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ORG Compound, Cotabato City
Tel. No. (064) 421-1248/412-1234
(Authorized by Bureau of Fisheries-Central Office, 860 Arcadia Bldg., Quezon Avenue, Quezon City)

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION TO BID

Procurement/Purchase of Fishing Nets and Accessories Intended for Gill Nets and Engine with the following specifications:

I. Gill Nets
A. Bottom Set Gill Net (converted to Surface Gill Net)
- 700 rolls PA mononet (fortune); 0.25 x 50 MD x 7k x 1,000m/roll
- 801,000 pcs. Radial Floats R-1L
- 400 boxes, Sinkers # xx
- 1,500 kgs. float line; # 120 monoline
- 250 kgs. sinker line; # 40 monoline
- 2,200 pcs. Netting needle

B. Tuna Drift Gill Net
- 100 rolls PA mononet; 0.40 x 4k x 50 MD x 1,000 m/roll
- 500 coils PE Rope # 12 ENT
- 500 coils PE Rope # 6 ENT
- 70,000 pcs. Rubber float (R-16)
- 2,000 kgs. Sinker (#2)
- 2,000 pcs. Netting needle
- 400 Spools monoline # 4

II. 58-units B&S Engine; 16 H.P. with complete accessories

The following pertinent documents are necessary for the pre-qualification as a whole sale dealer for the above mentioned item:

1. Business Permit
2. List of Available Fishing Materials, Engine and Accessories
3. Company Profile
4. Registration
5. Security Bond

The office reserves the right to refuse or waive any offer or quotation which do not conform to the specifications mentioned above.

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

(PDI – June 19, 20 & 21, 2003)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE OF LOSS
"SKF PHILIPPINES INC."
BEARHOLD PHILIPPINES INC. is the owner of fifty-seven (57) class A shares of stock of SKF PHILIPPINES INC., with Stock Certificate No. 001-A. Notice is hereby given that such stock certificate has been lost and cannot be located. All claims will be barred after one year and the lost certificates will be considered cancelled after which new certificates will be issued to the registered owners.
(PDI–June 20, 27 & July 4, 2003)

NOTICE OF LOSS
"METRO PARKING MANAGEMENT (PHIL.) INC."
Notice is hereby given that the following stock certificates have been reported lost - Zamri Bin Adam Stock Cert. No. 016 for one share, Metro Parking (Mi SDN BHD Stock Cert. No. 008 for one share, Shahlee Abdul Talib - Stock Cert. No. 014 for one share, Jamaludin Bin MD Ali Stock Cert. No. 013 for one share, & Salwah Hassan Stock Cert. No. 012. All claims will be barred after one year and the lost certificates will be considered cancelled after which new certificates will be issued to the registered owners
(PDI–June 20, 27 & July 4, 2003)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

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Direct Hiring Mktg Staff 18-45yo 9950042 Anna Sinoy

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Messenger 25-35yrs old w/in Sampaloc 7130141/7143954

Mktg Staff 09192535623 Glenda

X-RAY TECHNICIAN ASAP
RSV Clinic 924-9935

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Supervisor/Product Advisor w/wo exp. Pepe Paul 09162729617 / 7436414

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the heirs of LIDWINA LOS BAÑOS ABES had executed a Deed of Extrajudicial Settlement of estate with waiver of rights on April 10, 2003 and acknowledged the same before Notary Public Dante S. David for and in the City of Quezon, Philippines and bearing Doc. No. 139; Page No. 28; Book No. 1; Series of 2003 of his Notarial Register
(PDI–June 20, 27 & July 4, 2003)

NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the late REBECCA I. MADRIAGA has been extra-judicially settled by Ma. Theresa M. Quincina as per Doc.#76, Page 17, Book X, Series of 2003 before Notary Public Leovigildo Cerills of Lope Quezon.
(PDI-June 20, 27 & July 4, 2003)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given of Lost Plate Nos. NXM631; NXL924; NXL827; NXL834; NYC607 and NYC587 under the name of SAINT ROSE TRANSIT INC. (PDI- June 20, 2003)

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ELITE PIANO CENTER
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PETS

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In Loving Memory
on the 18th Death Anniversary of

TAN SU

His family, together with his dearest wife, children, and children-in-law and all his grandchildren and great grandchildren request the pious readers to remember him in their prayers.

Holy Masses will be offered in his honor on June 20, 2003 at the following churches:

Basilica Menore ..... 6:00 A.M.
Malolos, Bulacan
Barasoain Church ..... 6:00 A.M.
Malolos, Bulacan
St. Jude Catholic Church ..... 6:00 A.M.
Manila
St. Joseph Church ..... 6:00 A.M.
Masinglong

Our father may be gone, but his presence never left us and we will continue to cherish his memories for as long as we live.

ADOLFO (ADY) LLAMAS AMOR, JR.

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on June 16, 2003 at the age of 63.

His loving wife **Nenette Castro Amor**; children and their spouses **Alu** and **Earns**, **Aza** and **Gilbert**, **Mady** and **Ogie**, **Ari** and **Malou**, **Alex**, and **Urduja**; grandchildren **Skai**, **Chanum**, **Cherub**, **Rufino**, **Olie**, **Eiya**, **Mikee**, **Karla** and **Pongpong** request the pious readers, especially their relatives and friends, to join them in praying for his eternal bliss in heaven.

His remains lie in state at the Llamas - Amor family house, Llamas Building, Lingayen, Pangasinan.

Necrological Service will be held at the Lingayen Municipal Hall on June 21, 2003, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 nn. Interment follows after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Epiphany of Our Lord Parish, Lingayen.

In Loving Memory of the 2nd Death Anniversary of

MILA P. AJERO-FELIPE

who died on 6/21/01 with her seven-year old son,

XAVIER A. FELIPE

Masses will be offered on Saturday, June 21, 2003 at the following:

Church of the Ascension — **6:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.**
Lagro, Novaliches, Q.C.

Don Bosco Church — **6:30 a.m.**
Pasay Rd., Makati City

Her loving husband, children, children-in-law and grandchildren request the pious reader and those whose lives she touched to pray for their eternal repose.

SABINO ROMAN DE LEON, JR.

JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT (Ret.)

Passed away peacefully in the Grace of our Lord on June 16, 2003 at the age of 71.

His loving wife **Consuelo Besa de Leon**; children **Lisa** and **Rudy (Sanguyo)**, **Cherrie** and **Bobby (Martinez)**, **Bernadette**, **Annie** and **Ambet (Yuson)**, **Bing** and **Marge (Poblador)**, **Diana**, **Chito** and **Bec (Pascual)**; grandchildren **Joanna**, **Ria**, **Justin**, **Jerome**, **Jasmine**, **Mark**, **Lyo**, **Sinag** and **Niña**; siblings **Pedring**, **Conching** and **Joe**; in-laws, relatives and friends will sadly miss him, but the memory of his exemplary life will live forever in their hearts.

His remains now lie in state at the Sta. Rita Church, Philam Homes, Quezon City. Necrological services will be held on Monday, June 23, 2003 at 3:00 p.m. at the Supreme Court.

Interment will be the following day, June 24, 2003 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Sta. Rita Church, Philam Homes, Quezon City.

Donations to the scholarship fund of Ateneo HS Class '49, of which he was a member, would be much appreciated in lieu of flowers.

"What now has already been, what is to be, already is, and God restores what would otherwise be duplicated." Ecclesiastes 3:15

TYRON TOLOSA GUINTO

of Sucat, Parañaque

Peacefully joined our Lord on June 18, 2003 at the age of 29

His mother **CARMEN GUINTO**; *brothers* **ROGER** *and* **JUN**; *sister-in-law* **Wilma**, *nephews* **Jed**, **Joshua** *and* **Jerome**; *his ninong* **Mario Manuel**, *and close friends who stayed with him until the end,* **Ronald** *and* **Kathy Barrientos**, **Dick Barrios** *and* **Val Datumpines**; *aunts* **Fely**, **Cita**, **Auring** *and uncles* **Boy** *and* **Eddie**; *other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.*

His remains lie in state at Chapel C-10, 3rd Floor, South Wing Bldg., La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Q.C.

Cremation will be held on Monday, June 23, 2003 at Funeraria Paz Crematorium at 2:00 p.m.

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INTERMENT NOTICE

Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
NORBERTO M. MINGAO Sr.	June 21, 2003	1:00 PM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Angono, Rizal	#430 4th St., San Martin Subd., Angono, Rizal
TEODORICO M. MALONZO	June 21, 2003	9:00 AM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Angono, Rizal	#14 Norma St., San Carlos Hts. Subd., Angono, Rizal

www.holygardens.com
E-mail address: sales@holygardens.com

JESUSITA LANTING-OPANO

Joined her Creator on 17 June 2003 at the age of 77.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel F, Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

With family, relatives and friends, she will be leaving Arlington on June 21, 2003, Saturday, 7:00 a.m. in time for a Mass celebration and program at the Family Clinic College, A.H. Lacson St., (formerly Gov. Forbes, near Maria Clara St.) Sta. Cruz, Manila. Readers are invited to join.

Interment will follow at 10:00 a.m. at Himlayang Pilipino (Jacinto area), Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

DEATH NOTICES

DRA. CARMEN CHIKIAMCO ESTANISLAO

Died June 18, 2003 at the age of 85.

Today, her remains lie in state at the Family residence at 103 Naval St., Baritan, Malabon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, June 22, 2003 at the San Bartolome Catholic Cemetery, Malabon City after the 2PM funeral mass at the Immaculate Conception Church.

"Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..." — Psalm 21:15

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
INTER- AGENCY BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILTY AND TO BID

The PROCUREMENT SERVICE (PS) invites G-EPS registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Department of Education (DepEd) IT Equipment.

The approved budget for this contract is P17, 082, 230.00.

All interested parties are invited to attend the Pre-procurement Conference that will be held on July 03, 2003, 9:30 a.m., Thursday, at the PS Conference room, 2nd floor, PS Complex, Cristobal St., Paco, Manila.

The bid documents shall be available at the PS-PURCHASING DIVISION starting June 20, 2003 upon payment of a non-refundable of Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2,000.00).

The bidders shall submit their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes at the bid box located at the Office of the Operations Manager at the above mentioned address. Deadline for submission and receipt of proposals shall be on July 17, 2003 at 9:30 a.m., Thursday.

For more information, please call the PS-Purchasing Division at telephone nos. 561-6098 or 563-9402.

PS reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the Eligibility requirements and to this invitation. PS further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) EDUARDO P. OPIDA
Chairman, IABAC

(PDI- June 20 & 27, 2003)

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Ever & Eternal Garden Memorial Lot
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Republika ng Pilipinas
PANGASIWAAN NG TUBIG AT ALKANTARILYA SA METRO MANILA
Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City 1105, Philippines
CORPORATE OFFICE

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE FEASIBILITY STUDY AND PRELIMINARY DESIGN OF THE 50 MLD WAWA RIVER PROJECT

The existing water supply systems within San Mateo and Rodriguez (Montalban), both in the province of Rizal are supplied from deep wells operated by Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWCI) and from surface water provided by Balara. However, growing water demand in the area is diffucult to cover from existing sources and deep wells render inadequate yield and are costly to operate. Thus, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) in cooperation with MWCI is considering providing water to the area from existing Wawa Dam (the Project).

The Project will cmprise the renovation of the dam including intake structures, removal of silt from the reservoir, construction of a new transport pipeline and use of a packaged water treatment plant. The water treatment plant will be located close to the dam on a site already owned by MWSS, which has the right of way for the new pipeline. The plant's mechanical and electrical equipment has been provided under a previous project and is currently storerd in a warehouse.

MWSS secured a Technical assistance Loan from ADB to finance the consultancy services of the project. The consultancy services needed shall cover the preparation of Feasibility Study and Preliminary Design of the Project based on the scope of services stated in the Terms of Reference (TOR), a copy of which can be secured at the address stated below.

MWSS therefore is inviting Foreign and Local consultancy firms to submit their request for pre-qualification together with their company profile and organizational structure which will provide information regarding their field of expertise and specialization and the experiences of key personnel who will be assigned to undertake the required consultancy services. On the basis of the submissions, MWSS will shortlist the consultancy firms.

Consultants who expressed their desire to offer their services can obtain the pre-qualification statement/forms and submit the same in five (5) sets on or before 5:00 p.m. of **July 16, 2003** to the address stated below. Late submission will not be entertained.

Engineering and Project Management Department
Ground Floor, Engineering Building
Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, Philippines
Telefax No. (632) 9222568

(Sgd.) **ORLANDO C. HONDRADE**
Administrator

(PDI - June 20, 25 & 29, 2003)

BUSINESS Friday

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Selling the Philippines to tourists

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

THE PEARL of the Orient glistens with much beauty. It offers many natural wonders, from white sand beaches to perfect cone mountains to underground rivers. As an archipelago, she displays a rich variety of cultures: from the Cordillera tapestry to the Spanish fiesta heritage to the Moro array of colors. And the people are naturally warm, hospitable, and conversant in English.

Yet these attractions have not pulled in as many visitors as the Philippines deserves. These were the Asian visitor data for the year 2000:

Hong Kong	13.0 million
Malaysia	10.0
Thailand	9.5
Singapore	7.0
Philippines	1.8

France was the top draw in 2000, alluring 75.5 million visitors. Tourism in the Philippines accounted for less than one percent of gross domestic product. Contrast that ratio with Spain's seven percent.

THE SPECTACULAR Banaue Rice Terraces rise like giant steps to the sky. The man made structure built thousands of years ago with primitive handtools by Ifugao tribesmen spans 20,000 hectares. AFP

Vital industry

The tourist industry remains a vital cog of the economic machine. It is the world's fastest-growing industry and fits naturally in an era of globalization. By 2010, it is seen to create 252 million jobs around the world, as well as ring in $58.5 trillion in revenues In the Philippines, tourism can generate much foreign exchange, provide a horde of service jobs, and lead to foreign investments. The sector links closely with many other industries, like transport, food and beverage, entertainment, and construction.

How then can a country encourage tourism amidst fears of global terrorism? How is the Philippines being marketed to foreign and local travelers? Three winning directions stand out.

Hub and spokes

The state is following the hub-and-spokes model for attracting visitors. The four hubs are Manila, Cebu, Laoag, and Davao, which in turn will feed the tourists to the spoke provinces.

Take the Manila hub, for example. Quite an achievement is how the entire Intramuros has been spruced up into a "History Town." It's complete with colorful banners, traditional houses, soldiers in 1890s-era uniforms, and staff in bright regional costumes.

The center for all the attractions is the "Clamshell," a large airconditioned tent complex hosting a wide array of displays and dance numbers. Concerts are held every evening. Beside the Clamshell is the San Ignacio plaza, which features more programs. The celebration there of the culture of Muslim Mindanao last May showcased a riot of costumes and colors.

An example of a spoke is Bohol, which is being packaged as an eco-tourism site. Visitors from the hub, Cebu, take the fast ferry in the morning and arrive two hours later in Bohol. They see the rare tarsier, wander around the Chocolate Hills, cruise along the Loboc river and visit the ancient churches. Then they cool off in Panglao beach.

Friends of Filipinos abroad

Another bright idea from the tourism department is to harness the legions of Filipinos scattered around the globe. Do the math. There are more than 7 million Filipinos abroad. If each brings home just one friend per year, the total would be 7 million tourists.

"Would it be too much to ask each and every overseas Filipino to bring at least ONE foreign visitor to the Philippines each year?" asks tourism secretary Richard Gordon. Just two friends a year would result in 14 million visitors—more than the inflow to Hong Kong.

Promoting domestic travel

The state has given a big push to domestic tourism, or travel by Filipinos in their own country. Malacañang moves holidays so as to create long weekends. For example, the All Saints Day holiday lasted for five days. Around the city are posters of places to visit for these vacations. Those who ride the MRT train are reintroduced to the fiesta attractions displayed in the stations. The President herself has been promoting domestic tourism via many photo opportunities, including white water rafting.

The opening of the nautical highway will do much to cut travel costs. Vehicles can roll on and roll off (RORO) ships in a chain that connects Luzon to Mindanao. One port is found in Caticlan, which leads to the famous Boracay.

Fruits of the fiesta islands

The strategy is working. The tourism department has recorded a rise in hotel occupancy and in air and sea transport bookings. Arrivals in 2002 rose 7.6 percent, reaching 1,932,677 guests. That was a great turnaround from the 11.7 percent contraction in 2001 because of the advisories against the Philippines, the threat of global terrorism, and the wobbly world economy.

Boracay alone has earned P1 billion in four months, as tourist arrivals hit an all-time high. The governor of Aklan believes that arrivals in 2003 will break last year's record, which brought in P 2.3 billion.

Now, if only the state would ensure peace and order, the Philippines would catch up with the tourism leaders of Asia. *Comments to <darroyo@philonline.com >*

Young talents wooed by shoemakers for endorsements

NEW YORK—At the very tender age of 3-1/2, Mark Walker can sink 18 straight basketball shots in a row. With an eye to the future, Reebok International Ltd. has signed the talented toddler to an advertising deal.

Athletic shoe and apparel companies in recent years have shied away from spending millions of dollars to have big names in sports endorse their products, as these deals simply have not generated enough sales to justify the costs.

But marketing experts say the tables were turned when the world's largest athletic shoemaker Nike Inc. trumped archrival Reebok and signed a sponsorship contract with 18-year-old high school basketball prospect LeBron James in a deal put at $90 million.

"The right athlete can draw new customers into a brand." said Ken Shropshire, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business.

By developing a relationship with young talent, companies don't have to pay the same dollar amount they would pay a popular, professional player, Shropshire said.

Many young and untested athletes were signed up in a recent spate of expensive endorsement deals. Among them are 13-year-old soccer player Fredy Adu and Syracuse freshman basketball forward Carmelo Anthony, believed to be a contender for one of the top three players in this year's NBA draft. Both were signed by Nike.

Finding the next great one

With the retirement this year of basketball icon Michael Jordan, Nike needs to find the next-generation athlete who will drive sales and protect their market share in the $16 billion athletic shoe business, said Richard Burton, executive director of Warsaw School of Sports Marketing at the University of Oregon.

Shoe companies are also trying to stave off close competition by proactive advertising. If Nike had not been able to sign James, it would have been a blow to the marketing dominance of Nike, which has always kept a stable of elite athletes for its promotion.

"When you have Reebok and other players not successfully landing these type of deals, the brand in the long run will hurt." said Seattle-based Delafield Hambrecht Inc. analyst Raymond Jones. "Nike will keep finding the next athlete, next spectacular deal."

Jones said that consumer identity to basketball stars has been part of the American culture, and it will continue to work to the advantage of the shoe companies in the future.

John Shanley, an analyst at Wells Fargo Securities LLC, said the majority of consumers look at style, price and brand when purchasing athletic shoes, with the name of the athlete being the least important consideration.

In the past decade, athletic shoe companies have sought out athletes with the greatest marketing power. The Air Jordan series has been the best-selling shoes since the 1980s and they helped to build Nike's popular global brand image. It will be a shot in the arm for Nike's long-term growth if the company can copy Air Jordan's success to future LeBron James' signature products.

Shaq shoes for cheap

But not every endorsement deal justifies the extravagance.

"There are so many great players with so many sneaker deals, it's really fussing up the value of them because people are getting confused." said Jack Trout, president of Trout and Partners, a marketing strategy firm.

Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O'Neal saw their sponsorship contracts canceled by the shoe companies. *Reuters*

SMS marketing: From 'addicts' to conversations with God

MARKETING RX

Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

FOR the past two weeks, we have been writing about the marketing impact of the cell phone and it's killer application, SMS/texting and now, MMS (multimedia messaging service).

Since I'm a Globe subscriber, I don't have access to the new Smart Addict service. Ian Morrison, co-founder of TinCan Mobile Marketing services, and consultant to telcos around Asia including Smart, tells me that "thousands and thousands" of Smart users have subscribed to the new service. Without revealing the exact number, Morrison says that NBA downloads have proven to be the most popular Addict download—providing 40 percent of all downloads. The second and third most popular are currently "Babe Watch" (mostly models in bikinis ala Sport's Illustrated Swimsuit edition) and "Hunks" (guys showing off their pecs, I guess.)

Turn any full page color ad of the telcos and notice how they (Smart, Globe and now, Sun) are all giving away MMS capable cell phones to new subscribers. This should pave the way to a new era of interactive marketing/advertising media. Once the number of MMS capable cell phone users reaches one million, this should start attracting advertisers. Mimmie Ong, TinCan Mobile's country manager predicts this number will be reached in December. Ong says there are about 150,000 MMS capable phones that have been given away by the telcos in their recent promotions.

Direct marketers have been dreaming of a medium where they could have instant, interactive "conversations" with their customers or prospects. Everyone thought the answer was the PC and the Internet. It still may be in the US, where Internet penetration is 60 percent compared to the Philippines where only six percent of the urban population have on-line access. In Asian countries like Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan, where mobile phone penetration is over 50 percent and fast rising, the cell phone is taking over as the preferred medium. In Japan for example, 65 million Japanese own cell phones. That's half the population! Plus, 40 million of them surf the Internet with their cell phones. In the Philippines we have close to 20 million cell phone users.

Don't just ask us to opt-in -- offer consumers a cut!

To make opting in to receiving promotional SMS or MMS coupons or full blown video ads from advertisers more attractive, I predict that the telcos could go the way of what some e-mail marketers are doing. Offer a cut to consumers. Globe or Smart could pay P.10 or P.15 (via a credit on their bills) for every ad message that their subscribers receive/open/read (with SMS/MMS consumers are forced to open messages before deleting them, unlike in email.)

Using SMS to market 'God'

TinCan Mobile's country manager Mimmie Ong and Ian Morrison showed me the Hello God Campaign that they did in Singapore with OgilvyOne. The client was "Love Singapore"— a Christian evangelical organization; and they wanted Singaporeans to be invited by "God" and start going back to Church on Sundays.

Anyway, the Hello God campaign was a success by direct marketing industry benchmarks. After six months, about 80,000 or 2 percent of Singapore's handphone population of 4 million, subscribed to the service. It brought back a good number of Singaporeans to church. On Saturdays Singaporeans received text messages such as, "Coming to my place tomorrow? - God." To which many replied and texted back replies such as, "Lord, thks 4 coming into my life."

When Morrison and Ong presented this case study at last year's Direct Marketing Forum, it caught the attention of the SMART marketing executives in attendance. And lo and behold, the SMART Dear God campaign was launched just in time for the Holy Week break. Print ads, billboards and press releases encouraged SMART subscribers to text God at "463"—unlike other SMS games or contests, there were no keywords required; they could ask any question or pour their hearts out and expect a personalized reply.

Phone, new confessional box?

According to Ong, "The SMS they send in are very intimate, seeking counsel and advice from God, and often giving their names. Subscribers are now starting and ending their days by texting God "good morning" and "good evening" respectively. Texters are treating the service in a very personal and serious way. People from all walks of life text in and pray for a variety of personal reasons."

Here's a sample of some of the text messages that SMART got and the replies by "God" that were prepared by TinCan Mobile using Bible verses as its anchor message. From…

1. A troubled person who hasn't gone to Sunday mass in a long time:

"God, I've been so bad. D na po ako nagsisimba pag Sunday. Forgive me."

God's response: I assure u, my frnd, I do not lack forgiveness. Mk 3:28: "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men." - Love, God

2. a student who hopes that he passes:

"Thank u 4 everything, I just have 1 wish right now, I just hope and pray I can pass d board exam."

God's response: HELP s my middle name! "Fear nt for I m wit U. B nt dismayed for M ur God. I will strengthen u & wil help u.'" (Is 41:9-11) - Love, God

The amazing thing is that the replies seem personalized; as if someone were really interacting with the texters. Ong shares that they used a proprietary intuitive software that they developed called Conversations Platform that is designed to recognize keywords sent by subscribers and give an appropriate reply. (Artificial intelligence if you will.) To come up with the keywords, they did FGDs with U.P. students asking them the question, What would you text God?

From the replies of the 1,000 students that participated in the series of FGDs, Ong and Morrison categorized them into 50 categories and with the help of their copywriters, pastors and priests, came up with up to five to 30 possible replies with God's word—a bible verse to end each SMS reply. (Caritas, a Catholic organization, approved the use of the bible verses to be used.)

What was the purpose of the campaign? As of this week, the number of texts sent to God has reached one million. More than the P2.50 that was earned by SMART from each of the million text messages since April 6 (a portion of which was pledged by SMART to the Caritas Foundation), is the fact that now, those SMART users will think twice or thrice before switching to another telco. The service, which is of course exclusive to SMART users, is now their daily link to God.

Now that's what I call smart relationship marketing. I wonder what Globe will do to top that? As a Globe subscriber—I wait with bated breath. How about this… I've downloaded the whole bible on my laptop and in my Palm (via www.esword.net or www.bible.gospelcom.net). Why not figure out a way for Globe MMS subscribers to do the same thing?

(For questions or comments, email us at dmforum@edsamail.com.ph or text 0916-588-4877.)

One stop shop for foreigners keen on mining in the Philippines launched

By Christine Gaylican

TO LURE back investors into the Philippine mining industry, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry has created a Mining Investments Assistance Center to assist both local and foreign mining firms interested in local mining projects.

The Mining Investments Assistance Center is a one-stop-shop that could provide legal and technical assistance to prospective investors in the Philippine mining sector.

"The Center, which will be manned by a Mines Bureau and DTI personnel could provide all kinds of information regarding how they could do business here whether its a mining exploration or mine drilling project here," said Leo L. Jasareno, Mines and Geosciences Bureau officer-in-charge for mining tenements division.

Jasareno noted that the center could also provide assistance in processing various documentary requirements from different government agencies.

He added that the creation of the assistance center aims to cutback on the processing time of mining project applications that has been a hindrance to the development of the Philippine mining industry.

He added that the creation of the assistance center aims to cutback on the processing time of mining project applications that has been a hindrance to the development of the Philippine mining industry.

Another innovation being introduced by the DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau is the creation of a regional one-stop-shop that would also coordinate the processing of approvals from different DENR attached agencies.

Jasareno explained that instead of obtaining approvals from the various DENR-attached agencies such as the Forestry Management Office, the Protected Area Management Office, the approval could now be obtained from this one-stop-shop that will be put up in 14 regions.

Ins and outs of putting products on the shelves

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

GROCERY and supermarket shoppers take it for granted that their favorite brand of toothpaste or their favorite kind of cereal would always be on the shelf every time they go shopping.

Few realize that getting those products there from the manufacturers' warehouse is an industry an itself, involving thousands of employees and in some cases, millions of pesos in expenses.

As consumers become more conscious about price and competition both here and abroad becomes even more fierce, the pressure to bring down the cost of distribution intensifies.

Grant F. Pace, managing director of JDH Philippines Inc., a subsidiary of marketing and distribution expert Li and Fung, says in an interview that the trend among giant global manufacturers is to cut down on costs wherever they can and this has led them to concentrate on what they do best, which are R & D and manufacturing.

The sales, distribution and marketing side of their business are now being handled by companies that specialize in that business, such as Li and Fung.

GRANT Pace

The Li and Fung Distribution Group was founded in 1906 and was one of the first Chinese-owned companies to engage in foreign trade. It moved to Hong Kong in 1937 and steadily grew to become one of Asia's largest multinational trading companies.

Li and Fung is a publicly-traded company that handles between $4 and $5 billion worth of goods a year. JDH handles sales and marketing while sister company IDS Logistics takes care of the physical movement of goods such as trucking and warehousing of products.

Pace says this is especially true for multinational companies that are just starting to penetrate new markets, such as the Philippines.

"If I am Gillette for example, I say we make really great shaving equipment but what do we know about distribution to 7,000 islands in the Philippines," he explains.

Pace stresses that it is expensive for new global firms to spend on building up their own marketing and distribution network because it takes years of work and hefty investments.

They are also at a disadvantage compared with local manufacturing companies or local subsidiaries of multinational companies, which have been able to build up their network over decades.

"But new manufacturers can approximate that kind of penetration by going to supply chain experts," Pace says.

Li and Fung's unit, JDH, currently distributes different products to 61,000 outlets every month, and the number is increasing by about 1,000 a month.

These products include Gatorade and Snapple, Nivea, Sensodyne, Strepsils, Adidas, Dumex, Evenflo, Tiger Balm, Eden cheese and Tang, Maybelline cosmetics, Gatsby hair care products, Gerber and Ovaltine, Heno de Pravia, Lysol, Chapstick, Reynolds wrap and Fibrosine.

JDH's people go to the different distribution outlets including sari-sari stores in the most remote of barangays to widen the market for their principals' products. Target distribution outlets include supermarkets, groceries, drug stores, convenience outlets, schools, market stalls and wholesaler outlets.

"Our advantage is that we already have economies of scale and we have experts in the field, that provide some feedback to the manufacturers. It is part of our service," Pace says.

Pace says distributing products in the Philippines is not easy. Distribution cost in the Philippines is one of the highest in the region.

Aside from the fact that the Philippines is an archipelago, thus, increasing cost of transporting goods, groceries and supermarkets in the country are run differently compared to other countries.

In the United States and Australia, for instance, it is usual to see an army of employees restocking the grocery aisles at past midnight so that the shelves would be full once the store opens the next day.

In the Philippines, distributors have to restock the shelves during operating hours themselves.

The grocery store owners in other countries also shoulder the responsibility of actually putting the products on the shelf, which is not the case in the Philippines.

Pace says these "unique features" of the Philippine market make it even more imperative for new manufacturing companies to tap experts before they bring their products into the Philippines and provide Filipinos the luxury of choice.

JDH helps foreign companies penetrate the local market.

Tax and small businesses

TAX TIPS

QUESTION: Recently, I started a small business under my own name. How do I report income from this business for income tax? Do I have to file a separate income tax return for my business?

Answer: Your business is what is commonly called a sole proprietorship. Under this setup, the owner holds the business in his own personal capacity and directly assumes all legal obligations—including taxes—of the business. Accordingly, you should report the business income in your own name using BIR Form 1701 and 1701Q. The quarterly income tax returns (BIR Form 1701Q) for the first three quarters of the year should be filed on or before April 15, Aug. 15 and Nov. 15, respectively. The annual income tax return (BIR Form 1701) covering the total income for the year should be filed on or before April 15 of the following year.

Q: I am a fixed-salaried employee at a leading local bank. Sometime in 2002, I opened my own buy-and-sell business. Until now, I run the business while still employed with the bank. How should I file my income tax returns to reflect the income from my business? How do I go about deducting the personal exemptions from my income?

A: Before you started your buy-and-sell business, your bank employer withheld taxes from you salary. As an individual earning purely compensation income subject to withholding tax, most likely, you even had the option not to file an income tax return beginning taxable year 2001.

However, since you started a business in 2002, you are already required to file the quarterly (BIR Form 1701Q) and annual (BIR Form 1701) income tax returns. Your business income should be indicated in item 31A of your Form 1701.

Being a mixed income earner (with both compensation and business income), your total taxable income will be the sum of your taxable compensation income and taxable business income.

Your taxable compensation income is your gross compensation less the allowable deductions (i.e. personal and additional exemptions and premium paid on health and or hospitalization insurance not to exceed P2,400 per year, provided the family's gross income does not exceed P250,000 for the taxable year).

Meanwhile, your taxable business income is your gross business income, less allowable deductions (e.g., ordinary and necessary expenses for the business) and any excess of the allowable deductions from total compensation income. To determine your gross business income, follow this formula: Total sales less cost of goods sold, plus any income derived from other sources, equals gross income.

According to Revenue Regulations 2-98, as a mixed-income taxpayer, you can only deduct your personal and additional exemptions from your business income only to the extent that your compensation income is not enough to cover these exemptions. The personal and additional exemptions must first be deducted from the gross compensation income (or your income from employment with the bank). After such deduction, any excess personal and additional exemptions may be deducted from your business income.

Tax Tips is a public service of SGV & Co., to give readers a general and basic understanding of current tax laws, applicable rulings, existing regulations and jurisprudence based on the facts as represented. Answers to queries may not cover all potential tax liabilities and issues arising from and all reportorial requirements for taxable transactions. Readers are therefore strongly advised to consult their tax advisers or the Bureau of Internal Revenue. In no event shall SGV & Co. be liable for damages or claims, actual or otherwise, including those arising from tax assessments, on account of any advice given by Tax Tips. For feedback, e-mail sgv_information@sgv.com.ph.

Getting market visibility without spending on ads

By Eman Tonogbanua
Contributor

SO you want to play with the big boys? But you look around and see that your marketing department is a one-person one-PC affair. Your advertising budget is simply nonexistent. You don't have stores in every decent street corner or fashionable shopping mall. Exposure in those big and bright outdoor billboards is like reaching for the moon. What can you do to promote your business without losing the shirt on your back?

Enter PR into the picture. Public Relations or PR is the small business owner's best friend in terms of promotion. In other words, it can be the most effective way to get market visibility for small businesses.

There is no standard way to define PR. But experts agree that the core aim of any PR is to build relationships between parties that share a common interest. That is, a politician and his constituents, a public figure and the media, an employer and his employees, wholesalers and retailers and a company and its market.

> Experts agree that the core aim of any PR is to build relationships between parties that share a common interest

What your business can get

Get the public to form a favorable opinion of your product. The big boys, those multinational companies with very deep pockets, just came huffing and puffing into your neighborhood. They're thinking that their colorful full-page ads and huge billboards should blow your business into the ground. But after six months your sales are unaffected and, in fact, growing. That's because you had the foresight to own the arena of public forum, which is the media. Your diligently planned PR campaign turned public opinion over to your side. Not only are your prospects reading about your quality products in the dailies but they are also endorsing your business to their friends. Now what would you believe, a paid sales pitch or a freely written news article?

PR will not cost you an arm and a leg. It's amazing how some businesses, as soon as they get enough cash, will turn all their attention into pricey forms of promotion. And then they wonder why their product cost is climbing. To top it all, they get their customers to subsidize this added cost with every purchase. PR, compared on cost per audience reached, is the most gainful way to get your message across. One full-page ad is comparable to one month's PR retainer fee. Imagine what you can achieve, marketing-wise, in a month. One 30-second TV commercial matches with two, even three months worth of PR services. These are just for the placements; you'll need an abacus if you want to count the production cost.

Boosts employee morale

Quality employees are the most valuable resource a company can have. It's vital to attract and keep them. These competent workers are attracted to businesses that are respected by the community. Everyone wants to work in a company with familiar products or services. PR helps give the workers pride in their work. Then they meet friends and tell them all the good things your company does.

There are longer-term benefits of PR as well. When business is down and money is scarce, a company will often survive on the relationship it has established with their public—employees, partners and market. With public opinion on your side, you have a better chance of emerging through any crisis unscathed. Companies who get tangled in trouble often call for crisis management because they didn't do PR for prevention.

There are many things PR can do for businesses both small and big. Companies who know how to use PR often become the most successful.

(The author is the communications director of Ardent Communication)

'Insomnia' ads from RP wake them up in the Olympics of Advertising

By Roger Pe
Contributor

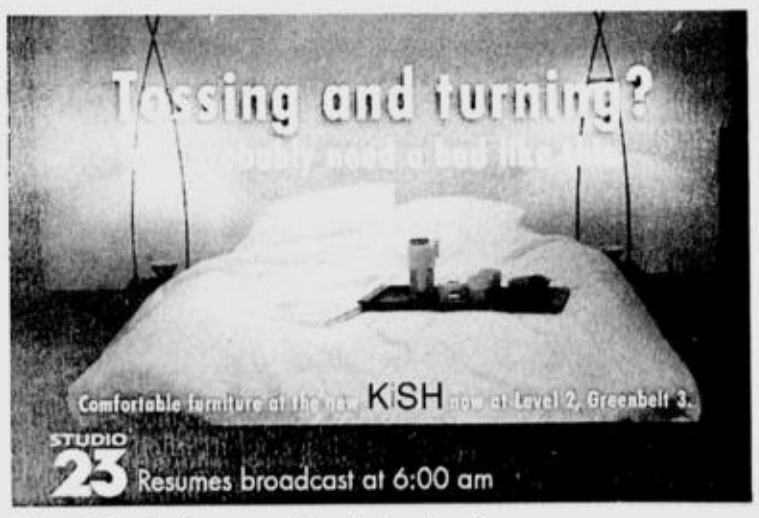
CANNES—Since Monday, all roads in the advertising industry led this picturesque Mediterranean city for the International Advertising Festivals.

Close to 10,000 key players from the global industry converge annually to view the best in international advertising creativity.

The Olympics of advertising rolled out last Sunday at the Palais des Festivals on Cote d' Azur with around 5,000 television commercials, 10,000 print, outdoor and website ads, 700 media solutions and 2,000 direct marketing entries competing for gold, silver and bronze Lions, including the penultimate Grand Prix.

Unlike all other advertising competitions around the world, these entries can be viewed in various venues at the festival site at any given time.

Among those which landed in the elite circle of finalists released on Wednesday was a Philippine campaign entry in media solution category: TBWA-Santiago, Mangada & Puno's 'insomnia' ads for Alaska Milk and Kish Boutique.



Kish ad simply shows a modern bed as visual.

Called insomnia ads, these arresting 'tv-print' ads appeared in Channel 2 and 23 from 1:00 to 5:00 in the morning when most local stations have signed-off.

Innovative and a media breakthrough for its creative cost-effectiveness, this campaign has caught the attention of the night-owls, whom many say, is a growing segment.

Why it went past the elimination round, may be because the TBWA-SMP campaign was solid on the main objective of the competition: they were idea-driven ads and not merely visual or copy punning.

Will the TBWA-SMP ad bag the country's first legit medal or gold in the Olympics of advertising? We will find out on Sunday.

The Kish ad says "Tossing and Turning? You Probably Need A Bed A Like This."

The ad simply shows a modern bed as visual.

The Alaska ad merely showed a glass of milk with a text over it saying: "Can't Sleep? Drink A Glass Of Alaska Milk."

The TBWA-SMP creative team was composed of Evans Sator (Art Director), Melvin Mangada (Executive Creative Director) Jimmy Santiago and Tong Puno (Managing Partners) and Peter Alegado (Media Manager).

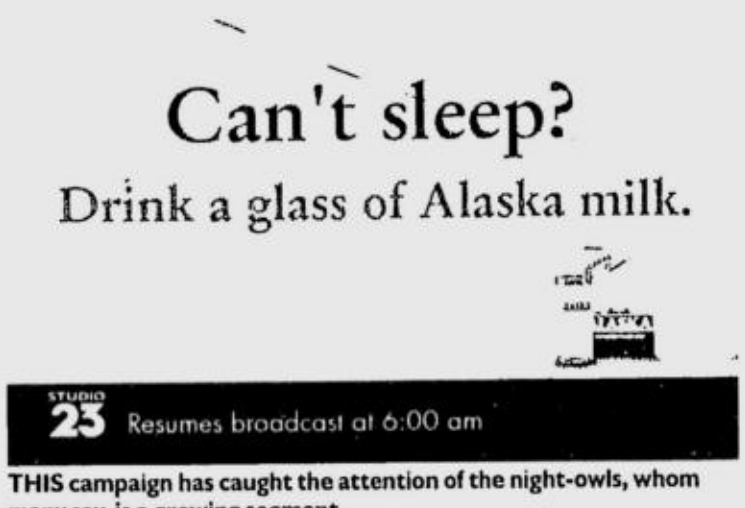
Head of Jury Dan Wieden, Chief Creative Officer of Wieden & Kennedy, USA said in his opening day remarks: "Award shows must be a celebration of where we should point the way forward—on being innovative and ideas-driven. If it can be done, it must be done in Cannes this year—the true international stage, with all the big world talents are. If you want to shake things up, this is the venue."

Meanwhile, the festival continues to be hounded by controversies. A would-be print Grand Prix winner was disqualified for not meeting the eligibility requirements in the corporate image category "because it had not run" in paid media.

An ad for a bookstore called Ferin by Leo Burnett Lisbon was the center of yet another competition maelstrom as Miguel Angel Furones, chief creative officer of Leo Burnett Worldwide agreed with the decision of the jury to disqualify the ad. Originally, the Ferin ad had been picked as the print Grand Prix winner with the outdoor Grand Prix going to TBWA Paris for Sony Playstation "Rebirth" (an ad in which a full grown man is seen emerging from the womb of sexy model.) It was also chosen as the print Grand Prix winner over the disqualification of the Ferin ad, as it was entered both in print and outdoor categories.

Despite the effects of world events and economic turbulence on the ad industry over the last few years, the total number of entries in Cannes this year remains high at 16,392, only five below the number in 2002. Entries to the film and cyber categories remained high while outdoor and print categories stayed as competitive as ever with a total of 8,669.

The Philippines has not won a single medal in Cannes since the competition began in 1953 though it had landed in the finals several times in recent years.



THIS campaign has caught the attention of the night-owls, whom many say, is a growing segment.

BUSINESS

Creditors set up board to study NSC reopening

By Michelle V. Remo and Gerald G. Lacuarta

CREDITORS of the debt-ridden National Steel Corp. have agreed to set up a nine-man board that would determine the viability of reopening the mothballed steel plant in Mindanao, Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II announced yesterday.

In a meeting with the presidents of the creditor-banks last Wednesday, Roxas expressed his desire to revive the NSC's operations and earn revenue from the plant's assets that have long remained idle.

The banks, which lent between P16 and P18 billion to NSC, also agreed with Roxas' proposal to appoint a general manager/chief executive officer who would oversee the process of selecting the plant's operator.

"We have to be innovative in dealing with the situation. These processes could be tedious and time consuming. Specific people must be named to handle specific tasks," Roxas said.

The board would have one representative each from the Philippine National Bank, Credit Agricole Indosuez, Land Bank of the Philippines, China Banking Corp., Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Equitable PCI Bank, United Coconut Planters Bank and Danaharta.

In earlier efforts to privatize the NSC, Malaysian investor Hottick Investment borrowed money in Malaysia to buy shares of the NSC.

Following Hottick's failure to service its debts, Malaysia's state-run Pengurusan Danaharta Nasional Berhad absorbed Hottick's debts and took over NSC's shares.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona said NSC's kilns could be up and running as early as July next year as he was confident that the government would be able to find a strategic investor by September this year.

Guingona, who heads the task force created by President Macapagal-Arroyo to oversee NSC's rehabilitation, said recently that the selection process has already begun.

The rehabilitation of the NSC's facilities would be undertaken in three phases.

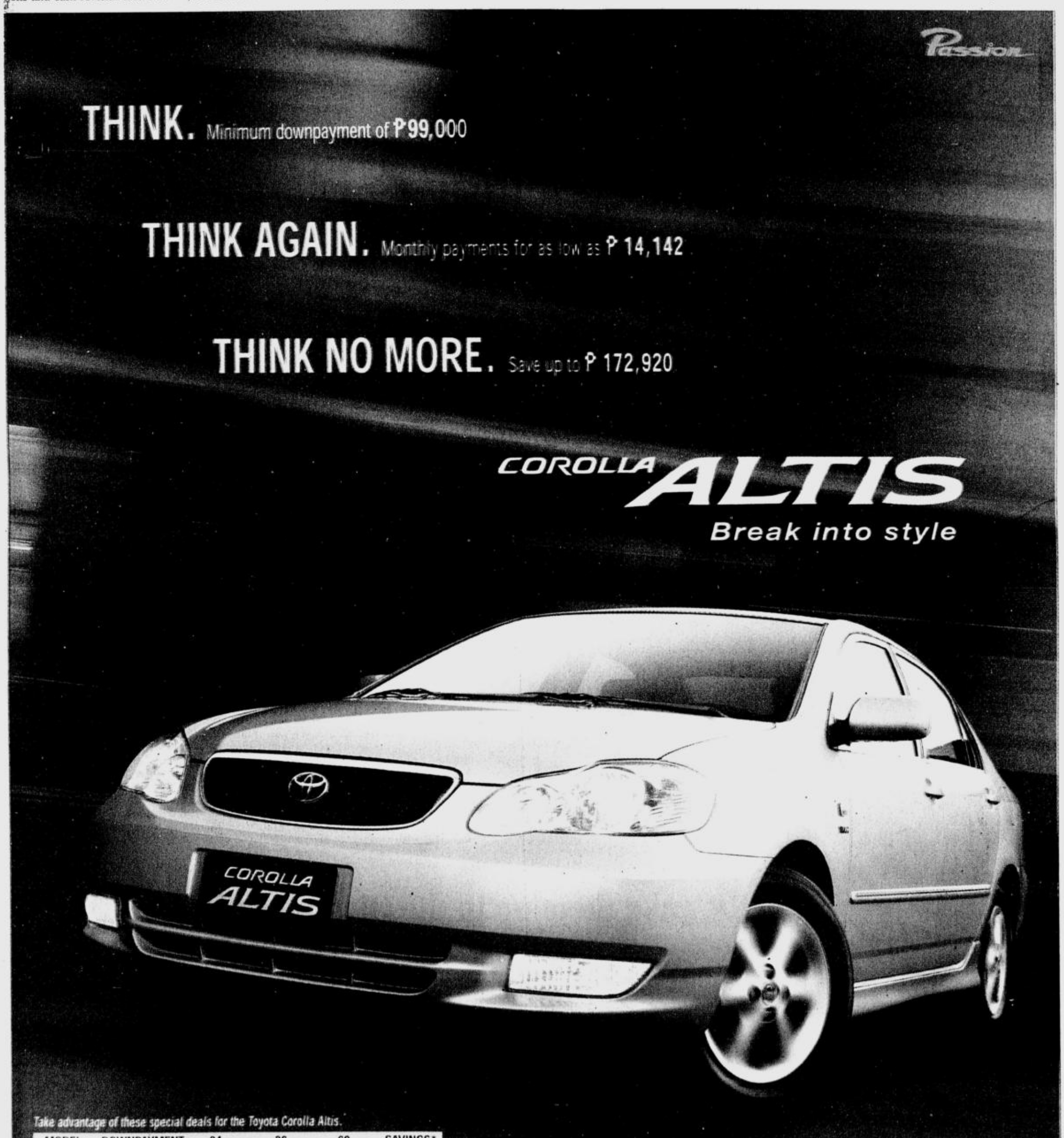
Work on the "integration" of the steel plant will start on July 2006 and will be completed by February 2009.

Dr. Antonio Arizabal, a former Science and Technology Secretary and executive adviser to the task force, said the first three phases of the Iligan plant's rehabilitation would cover the cold rolling mill, electrolyte tinning line, billet plant, and the semi-continuous hot strip mill.

According to economist Sixto Roxas, coordinator for the rehabilitation program, the rehabilitation would cost some P5.947 billion.

Based on initial feasibility studies, the plant could yield up to 655,000 metric tons of products worth some P11.5 billion during the first stage of the rehabilitation. In the final stages, the plant could produce 27.3 billion worth of steel products.

Guingona said the operation of the Iligan plant would "solidly contribute to the creation of livelihood opportunities not only in Iligan and Northern Mindanao, but across the country."



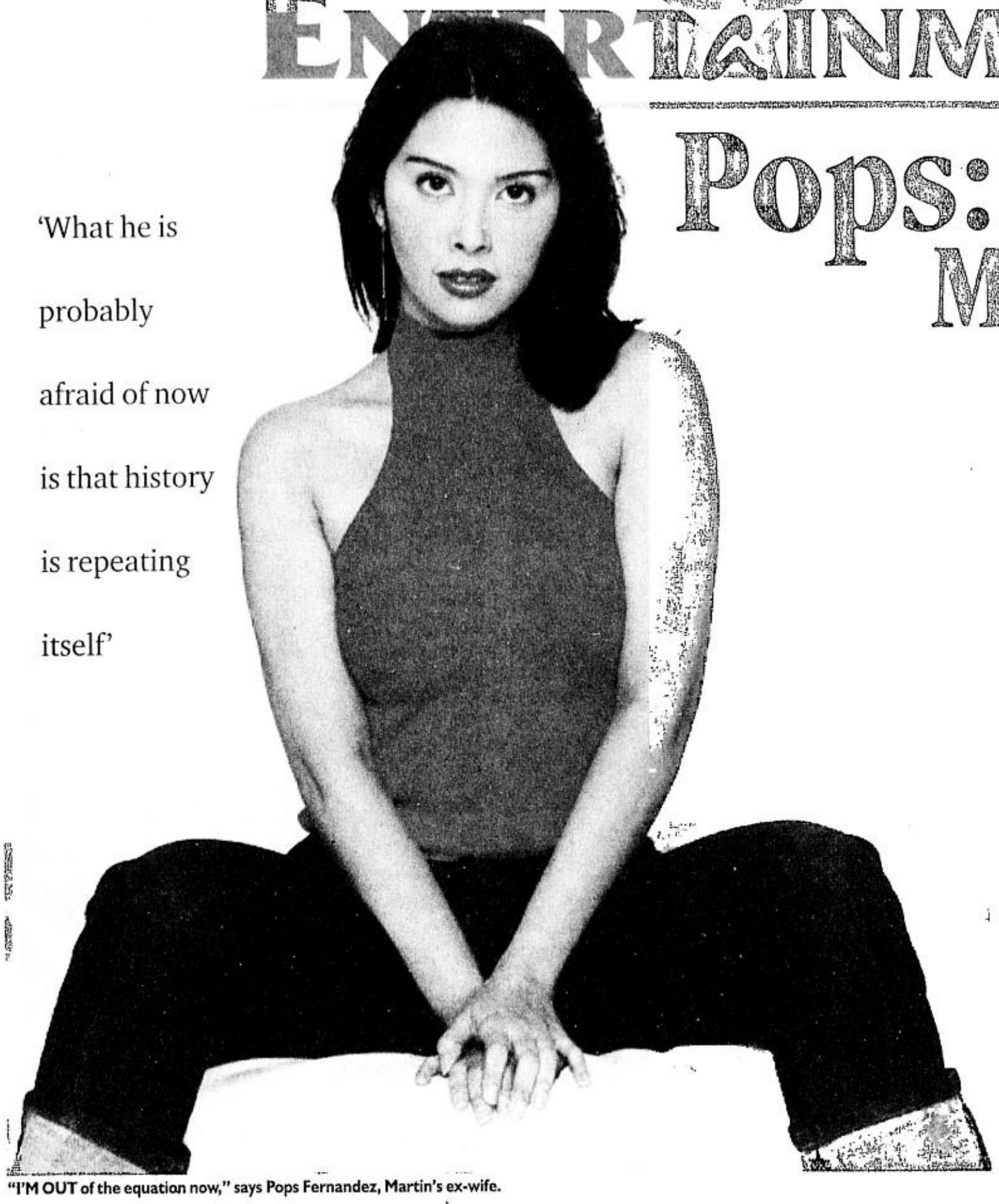
E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

Pops: Let's leave Martin alone

'What he is probably afraid of now is that history is repeating itself'



"I'M OUT of the equation now," says Pops Fernandez, Martin's ex-wife.

By Leah Salterio

POPS Fernandez refuses to get enmeshed in the controversial love triangle that involves her former husband Martin Nievera, his erstwhile girlfriend Katrina Ojeda and his rumored new flame, Cutie del Mar.

"I'm no longer part of the equation," said Pops on the phone Tuesday afternoon. At 5:30 a.m. that same day, she had arrived from Vancouver, where she had a concert.

"It's safe to stay away from it," she said of the latest Martin issue. "No matter what happened in the past, I don't think it's right for me to say anything now. I don't want to meddle in their *gulo*. It's Martin's choice to live his life and it's my choice to live my life."

She said that if this had happened a few years earlier, like when she and Martin had just separated or just after their marriage was annulled, she might have reacted differently.

"So many years have passed," she said. "It's a different situation now. I've already dealt with our separation. I have a different reaction now and I believe that's understandable. Let's leave Martin alone."

Whoever is involved in Martin's life right now, it's none of her business anymore, said the singer known as the concert queen.

Martin and Pops have two sons, Robin and Ram. Both boys stay with Pops in her Ayala Alabang home.

"What Martin is probably afraid of now is that history is repeating itself," Pops said. "But I don't want to be involved in Martin's life now or whoever he's involved with."

Pops would rather talk about her show at the MC Place, before an estimated crowd of 8,000, in Vancouver last Saturday.

She said, "When they asked me to perform in Vancouver, I remember I even asked, 'Are there many Filipinos there?"

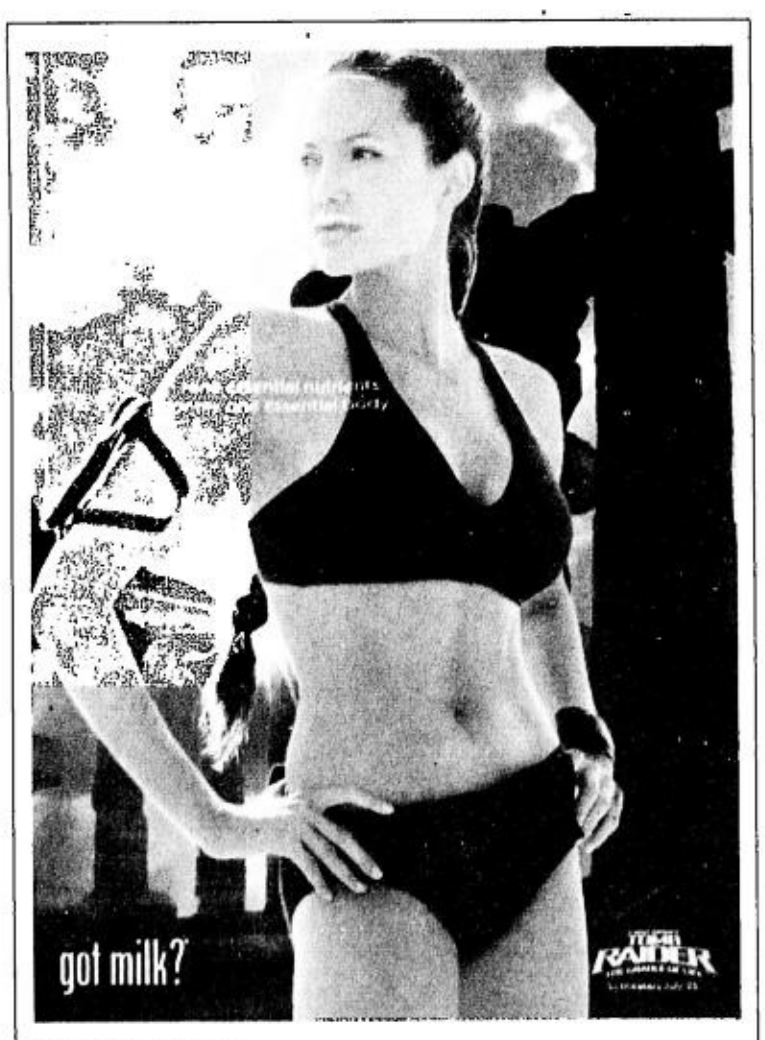
"But my concert was in one of the biggest venues in Vancouver and I was so surprised when I saw the crowd. They were very responsive and excited. We made the Filipinos in Vancouver very happy."

With Pops in the Vancouver show were Aiza Seguerra, Troy Montero and comedian John Lapuz.

"I had never seen Aiza perform before and I became an instant fan," Pops said of the former child star. "John made the audience laugh and I did duets with Troy. He also did solo spots."

She said Christina Aguilera and Justine Timberlake were supposed to perform in a show in Vancouver also, a day before her concert. But Christina and Justine's show was canceled.

Another concert had been scheduled for Pops in Toronto, but it was also canceled due to the SARS scare. Pops said the Toronto show would go on next month, now that the SARS ban has been lifted.



MILK MAIDEN
Angelina Jolie, daughter of Jon Voight and ex of Billy Bob Thornton, is the latest celebrity to take part in the "Got Milk" campaign in US media. This get-up, minus the milk mustache, is from her new movie, the sequel "Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life."
REUTERS

Does Harry Potter still have box-office magic?

NEW YORK—With the new "Harry Potter" book hitting retail shelves this week, the movie industry has trained an eye on whether the films about the British boy wizard can continue casting a lucrative spell over box offices and merchandise sales.

The stars, Daniel Radcliffe, who plays Potter, and Rupert Grint and Emma Watson, who portray his sidekicks Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, are aging beyond the range of their characters, and loyal fans are growing older, too.

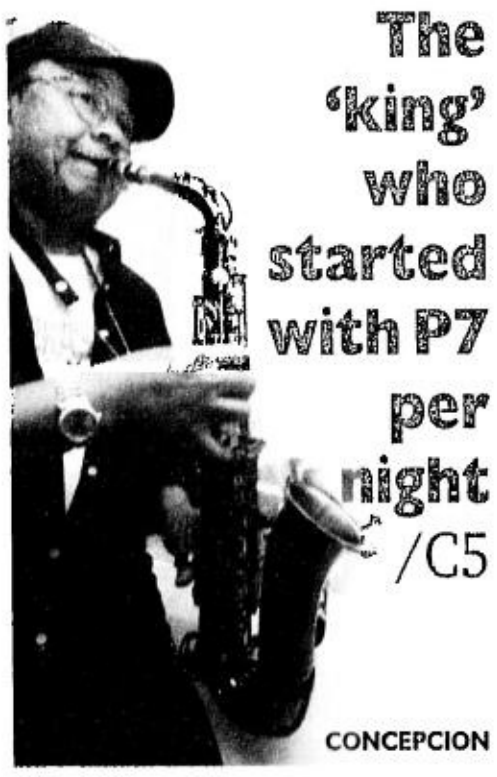
The movies have been major moneymakers for AOL Time Warner Inc.'s Warner Bros., which produced them and has an option to make movies of all of the seven planned books in the series by J.K. Rowling.

"Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" of 2001 and last year's "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" have raked in over $1.8 billion and rank in the No. 2–behind "Titanic"–and No. 6 spots on box-office charts.

"Prisoner of Azkaban" hits theaters in summer 2004. It will be followed in November 2005 by "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," and the movie for this week's "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" will come about 18 months later. *Reuters*

DID YOU KNOW...

Kris Aquino vomited six times two Wednesday nights. Lest people start saying "I knew it" and that she's finally pregnant again, she's not. The girlfriend of Parañaque Mayor **Joey Marquez** as a matter of fact suffered an upset stomach after doing a "Fear Factor" kind of episode for "Morning Girls," her daily morning talk show on ABS-CBN. Kris drank snake blood mixed with red wine, and ate ox brain, snake and frog.



The 'king' who started with P7 per night /C5

CONCEPCION

FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND

A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG

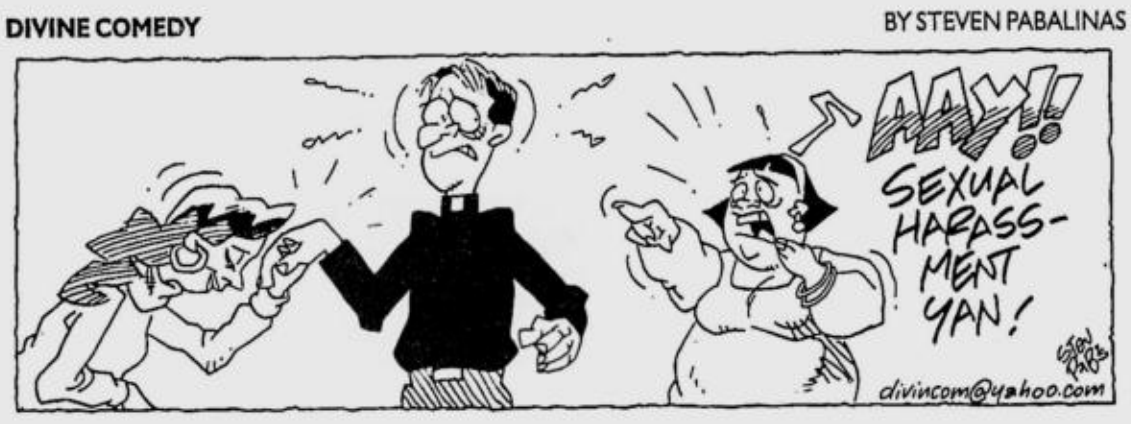
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You easily arouse strong emotions in others. This is because you are charismatic and emotionally intense yourself. Ironically, you are often unaware of your influence on people. Whatever you tackle, you learn quickly. At times, you seem to have "magic" powers. Work hard in the year ahead because the rewards will come to you in 2004 **Birthdate of:** Nicole Kidman, actress; Bob Vila, home-improvement guru; Cyndi Lauper, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Without any extra effort on your part, you are actually charming to everyone you meet today. Words fall trippingly from your tongue like pleasant notes for all to hear.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You could be on the receiving end of someone's generosity today. Or you might be the generous person who gifts someone else. Either way, you're happy.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel genuine compassion and sympathy for people in other cultures or distant lands. The reason your response is so strong is that you can understand what they feel and think. You know their suffering.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): In your own quiet way, you want to save the world today. Just do whatever is right in front of your face. Help the first person who needs it.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Conversations with partners are warm and sympathetic today. True feelings of spiritual love and unselfishness flourish. And it feels good.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Any work connected with chemicals, drugs, gas and oil will go well today. In fact, you could boost your earnings or your reputation in some way.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is the perfect day for escape—especially on a vacation. You want to get away from obligations and dull routine. Indulge this need any way you can.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Someone might give you a sweet present today. On the other hand, this gift might come in the form of an expression of love or admiration. Either way, consider yourself lucky.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Discussions with others tend to focus on impractical, fanciful subjects today. Don't worry about being in a dreamy fog. Some days are just like this. Don't fight it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You will likely be in a position to counsel or advise a co-worker today. Be honest and genuine. Don't try to be important: Be helpful.

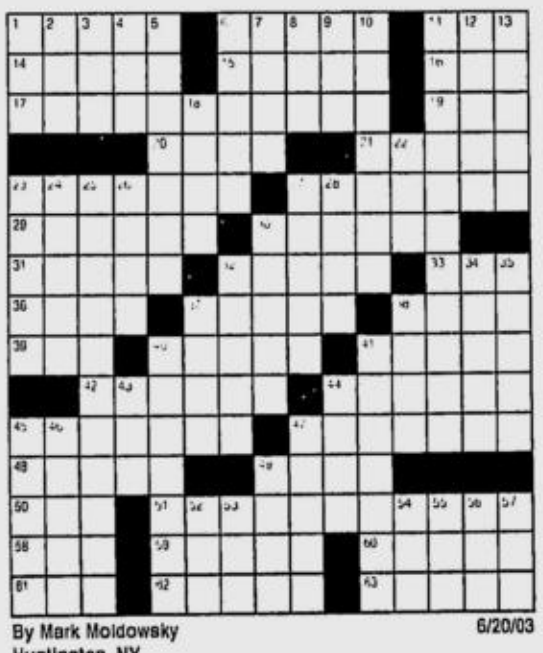
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): All you really want to do today is have a good time! Pleasure, romance and escape through indulgences are tops on your list.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You are ruled by Neptune. Today, Neptune is beautifully favored by fair Venus. This simply means it is a pleasant day to take it easy. Don't try to push the envelope.

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Mark Moldowsky
Huntington, NY
6/20/03

ACROSS
1 Whitman and Pickens
6 Be worthy of
11 Setup punch
14 Hayes or Newton
15 University of Maine locale
16 Completely
17 Factory timekeepers
19 A/C measure
20 Has a meal
21 Sedate
23 Pulls up stakes
27 Trash takers
29 Scenes in a mirror
30 Penny material
31 Uses a VCR
32 Heavy reading
33 Female GI, once
36 Fork-tailed bird
37 Well-known
38 Barrett of gossip
39 __ mode
40 Extremely cold
41 Car lifts
42 Emphatic typeface
44 Bivalve mollusk
45 Tom Cruise movie, "__ Sky"
47 Well off
48 Actor Milo
49 Equivalent
50 Simpson trial judge Lance
51 Lenten treat
58 Zodiac cat
59 Opera songs
60 Eradicate
61 Noah's vessel
62 Profundity
63 Tendon

DOWN
1 Small drink
2 Fighting Tigers' sch.
3 Author Fleming
4 Brit's raincoat
5 Action plans
6 Sheds skin
7 Greeks' Cupid
8 Large mythical bird
9 John Hancock medium?
10 50/50 shots
11 Lewis Carroll poem
12 Take in, as pants
13 Makes indistinct
18 Dental additions
22 Corrida shout
23 Former coach of the Bears
24 WWW communication
25 Peter Pan's nemesis
26 "The Night of the Hunter" screenwriter
27 Zeroed in on
28 Imitated
30 Kind of book or relief
32 Actress Shire
34 Twistable joint
35 Checked out the joint
37 Dropped
38 Track event
40 Knight of the Round Table
41 Neighbors to keep up with
43 Deadlock
44 Crooner Perry
45 Behold!
46 Star-like bloom
47 Grassy swampland
49 Fitzgerald forte
52 Mineral deposit
53 Gratuity
54 __ Lanka
55 Roll-on choice
56 Avail oneself of
57 Innovative

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

S	I	T	U		A	B	N	E	R		F	E	S	T
A	M	O	K		C	O	A	T	I		O	I	L	Y
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			S	A	N	D	I	E	G	O	G	O	G	O
P	R	A	N	K	S			L	A	C	E			
I	A	S	I			A	M	I	N	O		P	E	T
C	H	A	T	T	A	N	O	O	G	A	G	A	G	A
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KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

'Queen of game shows' of the '80s

By Marinel R. Cruz

THERE is nothing on television nowadays that former TV director Heidi Sison has not thought of or done during her heyday.

Direk Heidi, as she was popularly known, was widely recognized for her pioneering and innovative efforts in TV programs.

In the '70s, she directed the popular variety show "Seeing Stars with Joe Quirino" which ran for almost 17 years, and the daily noontime show "Student Canteen" hosted by the stalwarts of Filipino hosts—Eddie Ilarde, Leila Benitez and the late Bobby Ledesma.

She also directed the original telenovela, "Flor de Luna" that started the love affair of then pudgy teener Janice de Belen and Filipino viewers.

YESTERDAY

Sison described herself as the "queen of game shows of the '80s" for she also directed "Paligsahan sa Dos," "This Is It" and "Halo-Halo Special."

She directed musical shows for '70s stars Victor Wood, Nelda Navarro, Carina Afable and Rudy Genasky.

She used to be a talk show host as well. She emceed "Eye Witness," a late afternoon program on Channel 13 that presented the lighter side of show biz personalities instead of focusing on controversies.

"The show's concept was much like Inday Badiday's Sunday show today," Sison explained.

From 1987 to 2000, she was in the mountains of Northern Luzon doing documentaries mostly for the military. When she came back, she became an anchorperson of the radio program "Direk Heidi" on dwWW.

"I'm a director," she declared. "I'm creative. As a radio commentator, I commended people for their work, but I also lambasted them for sleeping on their jobs. I used this gift to make a positive impact on other people's lives."

Sison graduated cum laude from the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City with a bachelor of arts degree in speech and drama. She then took up radio, television and film at the Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois.

WOMAN FOR ALL seasons, Heidi Sison now.

WITH Jukebox King Victor Wood in the '70s.

'I feel very fulfilled, not tired, after being in the business for 37 years'

In 1995, she married Pedro Sison. They have three children—Dennis, Leah and Johanna. Sison, now 62, is grandmother to two girls and a boy.

Sison said she made sure that none of her children went into show business, because "it's a crazy business."

"I did not want them to live an abnormal life," she said. "Show business is not a stable field."

Her eldest child, Dennis, is an executive of a soft drink company. Leah is a chef based in New York. Johanna is a clinical psychologist.

Sison said she is still very passionate about being a communicator. "I feel very fulfilled, not tired, after being in the business for 37 years," she said. "This is because I shift my attention from one particular field to another."

Last March, she resigned from her daily radio program, "Direk Heidi," to concentrate on Character Builder Foundation Inc. (CBFI), which she put up five years ago.

The CBFI is involved in organizing character-building seminars for sales personnel, factory workers and househelps. It also conducts art contests ("Paint the Future") and art exhibits ("Adopt-A-Character") for children.

"I did quite well on radio because I was able to touch people's lives," she said. "People say I make a lot of sense when I talk. After five years of radio, I felt it was the right time to put up a foundation to promote positive Filipino values."

She is most proud of the plays that the foundation stages in different parts of Luzon. She calls the plays "Mga Kuwento ni Direk Heidi."

"The audience of the storytelling show is mainly children," she said.

She said she presents to her young audience stories of day-today experiences with moral lessons. She commissions UP students to act in most of the plays.

To raise funds for its projects, the CBFI is staging a "Gabi ng Musikang Pilipino" concert on July 27 at the Henry Lee Irwin Theater of the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City. The show will feature, among others, performers Jose Mari Chan, Marissa Sanchez, Hajji Alejandro, Celeste Legaspi, Anna Fegi, Alma Concepcion and the South Border.

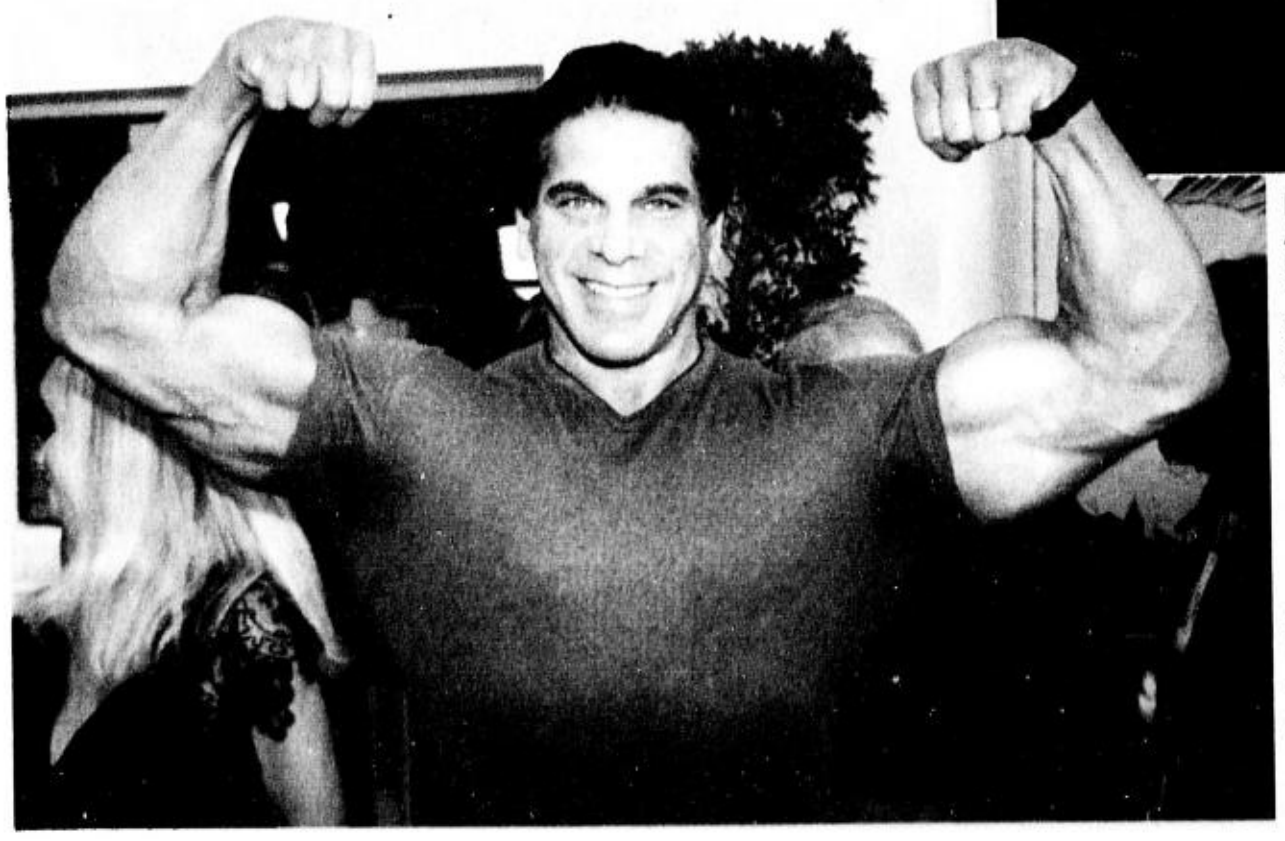
Sison said she would continue doing the things she has been doing for years, communicating. "I keep telling my children, *'hanggang kaya pa, kakayanin ko.'* You never know. I might find someone I could train to do what I do."

THE OTHER HUDSON

Goldie Hawn, the former "Laugh-In" giggler who won an Academy Award for best supporting actress for her first movie, "Cactus Flower," arrives at the premiere of the movie "Alex Emma" in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles with her son, Oliver Hudson. Oliver and his sister Kate Hudson are her children by her first husband, a director. Her current husband is actor Kurt Russel. AP

MRS JET LI

Action superstar Jet Li is accompanied by his wife Nina at the premiere of "The Hulk" in Los Angeles. Li is the star of such box-office and critical hits as "The One" and Zhang Yimou's "Hero." REUTERS



SHOW STOPPER

THE ORIGINAL 'HULK'

Lou Ferrigno, who played "The Hulk" on television, poses for photographers during the L.A. screening of the movie version starring Eric Bana. Ferrigno is also in the movie, playing a security guard. REUTERS

Captain Picard has taken last Enterprise trip

LONDON—After 16 years at the helm of the Starship Enterprise, Patrick Stewart is turning his back on the future and boldly returning to what he loves best.

On Wednesday the striking British actor with the bald pate and mellifluous voice takes center stage once more in London's theaterland, starring in Henrik Ibsen's "The Master Builder."

Stewart trod the boards for 27 years in his homeland before taking the science fiction role in Hollywood that made his face instantly recognizable to millions of Star Trek fans.

When he came to London last December to publicize "Star Trek Nemesis," the 10th film in one of cinema's most successful franchises, he signaled that his days steering the world's most renowned spaceship were over.

"When the party comes to a close, it is best to leave before you are the last guest," he said of the part that changed his life.

The film's disappointing box office performance ended his days as Captain Jean-Luc Picard on a downbeat note.

But Stewart is fiercely proud of the Star Trek phenomenon, which ranks alongside the James Bond sagas and the Star Wars epics as one of the entertainment industry's most endurable legends.

"I don't feel it is a millstone," he said then. "I am tremendously proud. The series is an iconic series."

On a provincial tour with the Ibsen classic before its London premiere, the 62-year-old actor firmly put the past behind him.

The only autographs he would sign for ardent "Trekkie" fans at the stage door were on programs for the play.

But Stewart admits that the pulling power of Captain Picard–along with his role as the wheelchair-bound Professor Xavier in the blockbuster X-Men movies–gives him box office clout.

This production reunites Stewart with John Logan, who wrote the script for the Oscar-garlanded epic "Gladiator" and then penned "Star Trek Nemesis."

Logan has written a new translation of Ibsen's masterpiece about an ageing architect who falls for a younger woman.

"I'm enjoying my life and my work now more than any other time in my career," he says. *Reuters*

Why Regine turned down other TV hosting offers in favor of 'Search for a Star'

HERSELF a product of singing competitions, Regine Velasquez now hosts "Star for a Night," a show featuring aspiring singers.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

AFTER the successful first season of "Search for a Star," which produced new singer **Sarah Geronimo**, the weekly talent search moves from IBC 13 to a new home, GMA 7, starting Saturday, June 21.

"Search for a Star" brings together the talents and technical expertise behind two giants in Philippine entertainment. It is also the latest joint production venture between the Viva Entertainment Group and GMA Network. In the past, they produced shows like "Ana Karenina," "Ober da Bakod," "Miss D," "TGIS" and "Villa Quintana."

Regine Velasquez, who hosts "Search for a Star," is also a host on GMA 7's Sunday noontime show, "SOP."

The chance to host "Search for a Star" was offered to her by Viva TV's **Veronique del Rosario**. Regine herself started in a talent contest, "Ang Bagong Kampeon," where she reigned champion for eight weeks.

"I know how it feels to be new in the business," Regine says. "I know what it is like to sing in amateur shows, in town fiestas, where you have to worry about what to wear. I understand how newcomers feel and I try to do what I can to boost their self-confidence."

"Search for the Star" is Regine's contribution to helping discover new musical talents.

"I've received a lot of offers to host TV shows," she allows. "*Iba't -ibang klase* like musical variety shows, sitcoms, dramas. But I decided to do this because I'll always have a soft spot for aspiring singers. I was once like them."

Contestants in "Search for a Star" go through various stages of audition before finally getting into the TV contest. The first stage is an open audition at SM malls held twice a month. Those chosen in the first level are called back for another, more exacting tryout. From this, the best in the batch are asked to return for the third audition, from which the three contestants who will compete on TV are selected. Industry professionals give them tips on what to sing, what to wear and how to project themselves.

Regine also takes it upon herself to give them pointers if needed, to make them feel at ease before the camera.

VIDANES. The ABS-CBN executive rose from the ranks.

"I tell them they are very lucky because when I was joining amateur contests, *bahala ka sa sarili mo*," Regine shares. "Now, they have a show where they can also learn a lot of things."

The three weekly contestants also get to do a production number with Regine in the show.

The winner stands to bring home P1 million in cash, plus other prizes. The first "Search for a Star" winner, Sarah Geronimo, has her own segment in the show where she visits the contestants at home and tells them the good news that they've been chosen for the TV competition.

Regine has also announced that her show biz career is now being managed by Aria Productions headed by her sister **Cacai Velasquez-Mitra**.

Regine used to manage her own career and was a free-lancer.

Aria Productions may be contacted at 426-7531, 928-78-68 or (0917) 808-0747, or at ariaproductions"mac.com. Its offices are at 18-A Mahiyain St., Teachers' Village, Quezon City.

Passion for excellence

"I'VE always been fascinated by TV," says **Ma. Socorro "Cory" Valenzuela Vidanes**, ABS-CBN senior vice president for TV and entertainment group.

Cory was taking up business management at the Ateneo de Manila University when she realized she wanted to take up mass communications instead. She shifted courses and later had her internship at the now-defunct BBC 2. After graduation, she stayed on at BBC and moved up the ranks until she became associate producer. However, in the tumultuous '80s, the station was forced to close down.

In 1986, Cory was accepted as associate producer at ABS-CBN.

Those early days, according to Cory, were the best years.

"We were picking up the pieces," she says. "We literally had to start with almost nothing. But we were able to successfully produce first-rate shows which the public received well."

In 1987, the station for the first time reached the top spot. "Since then, we've remained on top," Cory says.

In her 16 years with ABS-CBN, Cory has been directly involved in the production of a wide variety of programs, from talk shows to variety shows to comedies and dramas. As the network's SVP for the TV division, she is responsible for the production of all entertainment shows and programming.

Asked how she manages to get the job done despite its extensive scope, Cory says, "It's a matter of learning how and what to prioritize. It's also delegating and trusting the unit heads and production teams."

Cory says her rule is enjoy and love what you're doing. She makes sure that the members of her staff are as committed to the job as she is and that they give their 100 percent to their work.

She would like to encourage constant reinvention and thinking out of the box so that the network can come up with nothing but the best.

"We have to continue setting new trends," she says. "We can achieve this by further enhancing and developing our passion for excellence."

MTV Philippines serves up June smorgasbord

SHOW TIME

THIS month, MTV Philippines will give viewers a free tasting of sorts.

Check these out:

Clue: It's the only awards show that honors kisses, action sequences, dance sequences, villains and others and salutes the wackiest, hippiest and very best movies during the past year.

Clue: Buckets of gold popcorn are given away as trophies.

Answer: The 2003 MTV Movie Awards, hosted by pop music hot property Justin Timberlake and goofball Sean William Scott of "American Pie." Watch if Spiderman will beat Frodo for the best movie bucket, and enjoy performances by 50 Cent, Pink and T. A.T.U.

The 2003 MTV Movie Awards, presented by Globe Gentxt, airs on Wednesday, June 25, 5:30 p.m.

Clue: It's a 3-letter acronym that instantly conjures up a vision of screaming fans with a cool male host boxed in a glass-walled studio seen from the streets of Times Square in New York City.

Clue: It's a totally live MTV show.

Answer: "TRL" (Total Request Live), the leading MTV music program in America. TRL is packed with fans screaming either for its host, Carson Daly, or for the guest celebrities.

TRL begins regularly airing on MTV starting June 21-22 on MTV Philippines Channel 41, Saturday and Sunday, 2-4 p.m. and 9-11 p.m.

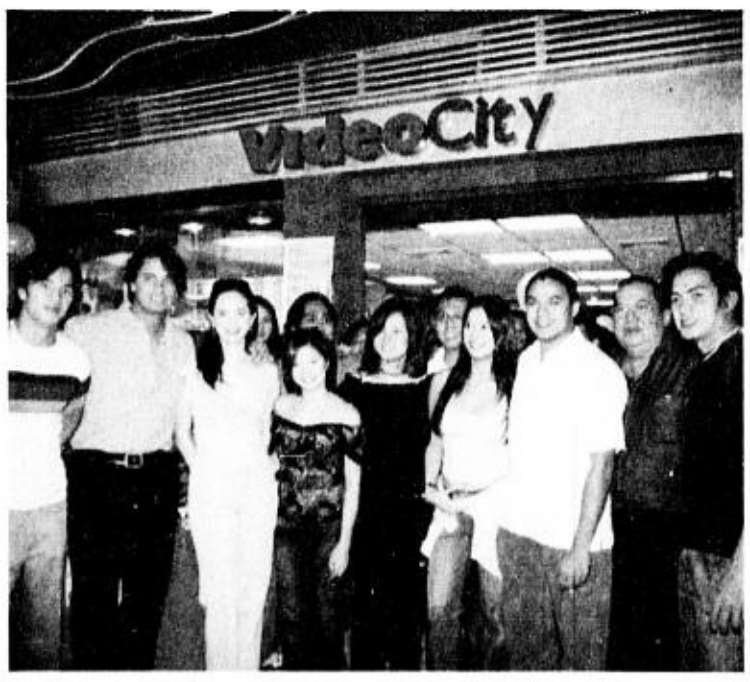
Evanescence, the catchy band behind the theme of "Daredevil," occupies the MTV hot seat. Catch them on "MTV Rock/d" on Sundays at noon and Thursdays at 9 p.m.

Pay tribute to your favorite bands from the '90s by watching "MTV Icon": Nirvana's MTV history on Tuesday, June 24, at 6:30 p.m., and Thursday, June 26, at 1 p.m.

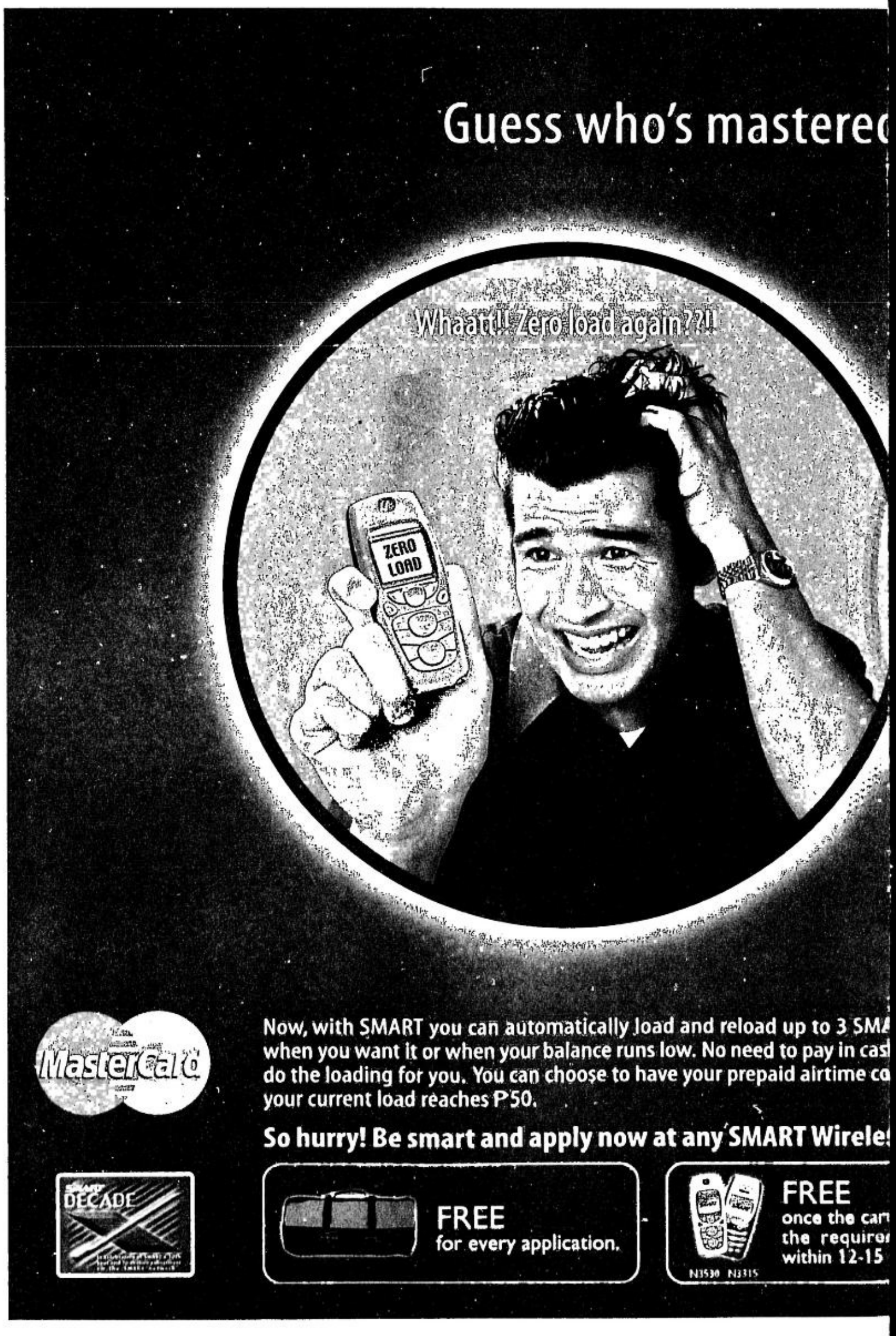
How about looking beyond music videos and performances to get the real story of stars like Jennifer Lopez, Macy Gray, Madonna, Craig David and Kylie? It's a rewind to the pre-famous days of these artists on June 28 and June 29, 2:30-4 p.m. and 9-11 p.m. on MTV's "The Story of."

Leave room for "Dismissed," a sweet reality TV dating competition with two rival prospects fighting for the embrace of the searcher. Better yet, catch the catty scenes of those who are not chosen getting dissed by the hunter on Saturday, July 5, and Sunday, July 6, 2 and 9 p.m.

For more details, log on to www.mtvasia.com or call 848-1321.



VIDEO CITY AT FARMERS' PLAZA
Star flocked to the grand opening of the newest branch of Video City on the 3rd level of Farmers Plaza at the Araneta Center in Quezon City, where the Gateway Mall will rise. The star-studded event was attended by (from left) Antonio Aquitania, Richard Gomez, Lucy Torres-Gomez, Maui Taylor, Anna Bautista, Andrea del Rosario, Jomari Yllana, Viva TV's boss Vic del Rosario and Wendell Ramos.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The 'king' who started with ₱7 a night

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

AS A boy, Jake Concepcion used to sneak into his uncle's music room so he could play the saxophone. He could not carry a tune yet, but he was bent on practicing and memorizing where the do-re-mi holes were.

When he was 7, Jake was taught by his uncle how to play the clarinet. His fingers were too short and small to close all the holes of an E-flat clarinet, which stretches to more than three octaves. That did not discourage him. He settled for a smaller instrument, the B-flat clarinet.

As he grew up, he gradually learned the bigger woodwind instruments.

Concepcion, now 67 and acclaimed as the King of Sax and "the fastest sax player in the world," says that because the clarinet is a very difficult instrument, it is an advantage to learn it before any other instrument. "If you want to become a good flute, saxophone or tenor saxophone player, you better start with clarinet." Like he did.

He started playing in clubs and cabarets when he was 17. He came from a poor family in San Jose, Nueva Ecija, and he wanted to earn enough money to send himself to school. He came to Manila armed with nothing else but his musical talent, and he got a part-time job.

"I didn't even have my own saxophone then," he relates. "When I enrolled at Jose Rizal College (in 1953), I joined the school band." At that time, universities offered scholarships to students who were members of the school band. The school band director happened to have his own band that needed a saxophonist. He asked Concepcion to join his band.

"When I told him I didn't have my own instrument, you know what he did? He got the saxophone from the school band and he made me use it," Concepcion recalls.

As a sax player, he earned enough to support his basic needs and his schooling. "I was paid P7 a night. That was good money in those days. I was 17. No other 17-year-old was making P7 a night."

No need for school

Unfortunately though, Jake the sax player could not keep up with school. Playing in the band required him to stay up until dawn so that when it was time to get up and go to school, he was too sleepy.

"My plan was to go to school during the day and play at night. But it didn't work that way. It was easy to say but hard to do."

In 1964, Concepcion went to Japan, where he still lives up to now. His music career flourished in that country. In the early '70s, he started recording albums. At first, they were collaborations with other artists but he later started recording his own albums with his original compositions.

Concepcion says he was very proud that even when he did not finish college and did not have a degree in music, he was able to impress many famous musicians with his playing. One of them was Gary Burton, dean of the Berkeley school of music, with whom he played in a Japanese government-sponsored performance in Russia. He remembers Burton telling him that he played so well he didn't need to go to school. He just had to keep up what he was doing, Burton said.

In Japan, he found not only a promising career but also a very fulfilling love affair. It was in Japan where he met Eiko, a Japanese who became his wife. He said they met in one of his performances and it was love at first sight. But during this interview, while Concepcion is on holiday in Manila for a few days, he could not remember the details of how they met. He is humble enough to admit that he's too old to remember, but he insists he chased her like he was chasing rainbows.

20 albums in 7 years

Asked if Eiko fell in love with him maybe because she was lured by his sax playing, Concepcion says, "I think so, yeah. My clarinet can be very, very sexy."

He adds: "When I play, I play by heart, too. If you don't feel it, there's nothing. You must feel it, put your heart into it. That's how you communicate with somebody. The first time I played the saxophone, I knew right there that it was the instrument that I wanted to use to communicate with people."

He came back to the Philippines in 1990 and recorded an album for Wea Records. By 1997, he had completed 20 albums in all, including 14 volumes of "Jake Concepcion, King of Sax," three Christmas albums, two "Best of Jake Concepcion" albums and one OPM album. In 1998, he won an Awit award for Best Instrumental Performance.

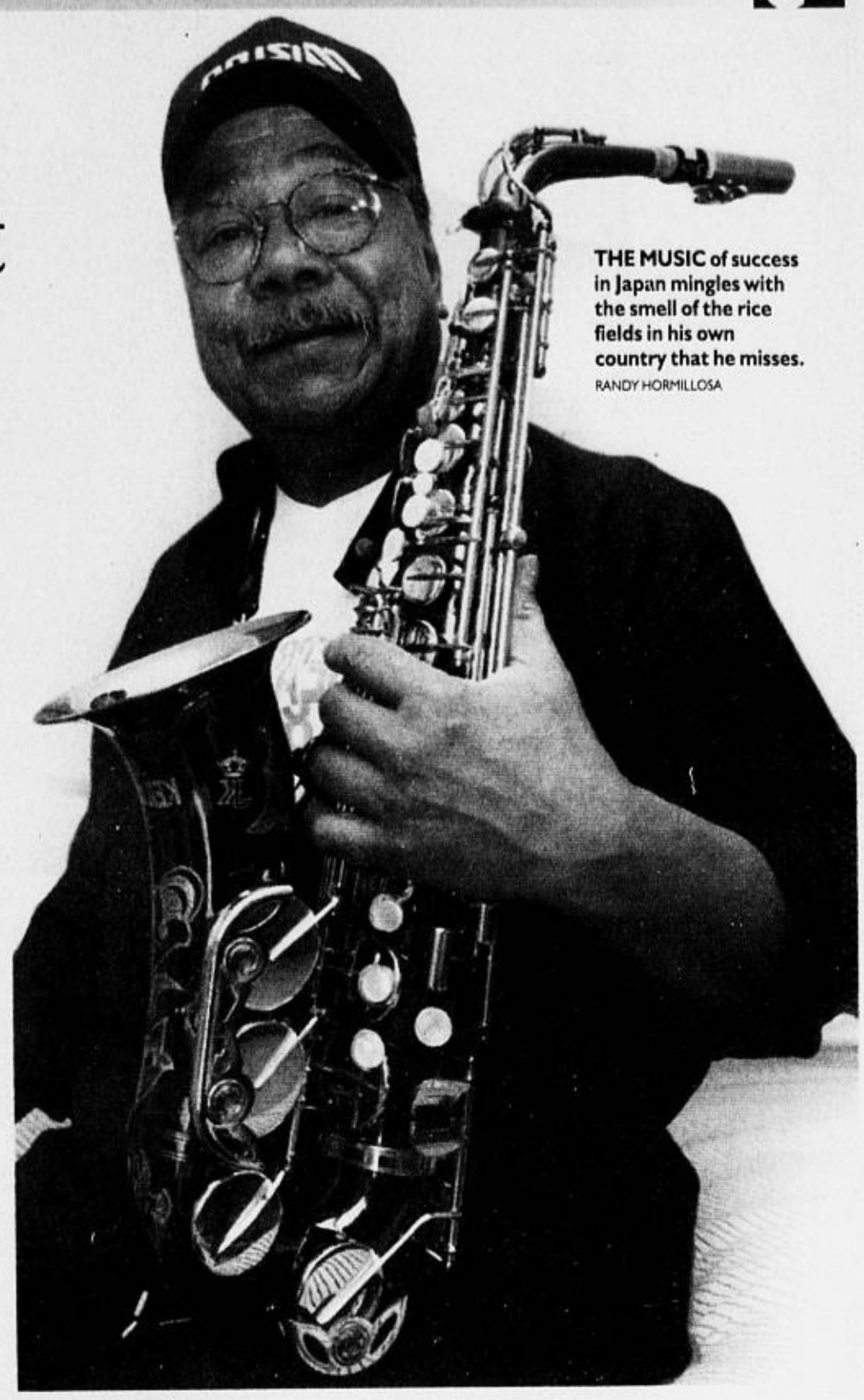
His popularity in his own country should have been enough to make him stay home, but he was also still very much sought after in Japan.

"But I do miss the Philippines," he admits. "My roots are here. When my mother was still alive, I came to visit here twice a year."

After almost 40 years in Japan, he says he still dreams about his hometown, even when there was really nothing there. "I even smell the rice fields. After the harvesting of rice, they burn the rice straw and that smells nice."

How does the title "King of Sax" sit with him?

"I feel like a king," he says.



THE MUSIC of success in Japan mingles with the smell of the rice fields in his own country that he misses. RANDY HORMILLOSA

Paolo sings in Filipino

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

PAOLO Montalban has been performing mostly in the United States, but we sense that he's going to be busier in the Philippines in the months to come.

His shift of focus appears to have started when he joined the stellar cast of **Laurice Guillen**'s "American Adobo," which was shot mainly in the States. Paolo must have liked the experience, because the next thing we knew, he was guesting on some local TV shows and cutting an album for Vicor Music Corp.

The self-titled album has all tracks, three of them with Filipino lyrics–"Ikaw," "Kung Di Tayo, Paano Na?" (the carrier single), and "Kung Alam Mo Lang." The language was initially a problem, but with the help of a dialogue coach and English translations, Paolo more than passed muster.

The English songs in Paolo's album include "Pure Imagination," "She," "One," "Next to Me," and "Do I Love You Because You're Beautiful" combined with "I Have Dreamed."

Since Paolo has sung in musicals, his singing voice is clearer and more focused than some other young singers. And, with his height and good looks, he could package himself into a soulful balladeer in the **Frank Sinatra** mold.

In terms of acting, Paolo is also generating interest locally, with some producers thinking of tapping him for their future projects. To play a greater variety of roles, however, Paolo should go beyond the usual "Balikbayan" type by really concentrating on learning to speak well in Filipino.

He should avoid the dead-end street that other "Balikbayan" artists like **Troy Montero** and **Brad Turvey** have found themselves in because they are still limited to speaking in English, or awkward Taglish.

If Paolo is able to lick the language problem (it should take him only six months of hard work), he could find himself with quite a flourishing career here, just as his US career may be in the process of winding down.

Freshmen on tour

THE FRESHMEN are currently promoting their new album "Ikaw Pa rin" with a bar tour. Their schedule of visits:

June 20 and 27, the boys will be at R&B in Angeles, Pampanga. June 21 and 28, at Arts Venue in Malate. June 22 and 29, at Ratsky's Malate. And June 25, at Streetlife in Makati (third floor, Glorietta 3.

The Freshmen is made up of **Roel**, **Edward**, **Joseph**, **Edward 2**, **Trician**, **Jerome** and **Daziel**.

As part of ABS-CBN's Kapamilya tour, the Freshmen will also be at Ever Commonwealth at 4 p.m. on June 21, and at Ever Ortigas at 4 p.m. on June 29. They will be signing autographs for buyers of their new album. "Ikaw Pa Rin" is available on CDs and cassettes.

Focus on youth

FOR years now, **Gina de Venecia**'s TV dramas have been focusing on the problems of women and children. They have opened viewers' eyes to the oppression in their midst, and what can be done about it. They have also empowered women and children to protect the many infringements on their rights in their own homes and workplaces.

After so many shows, however, there was the danger of falling into a pattern, or telling twice-told tales. So, Gina's new series, "Nagmamahal, Manay Gina," has wisely decided to focus this month on inspiring stories about and for teenagers.

Capping the month-long specials from June 23 to 27 is "Love Ko Si Sir," with **Jolo Revilla**, **Emilio Garcia**, **Katrina Perez**, **Shyr Valdez** and **Jackie Castillejo**. *Manay* Gina's weekday soap is telecast on GMA-7 at 2:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

"Nagmamahal Manay Gina" is produced by Gina's *ate*, *Manay* **Marichu Vera-Perez**. Our abiding wish is that, in their own good time, the Vera-Perezes revive the production arm of Sampaguita Pictures and start making feature films again.

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New OPM tunes in 'Himig Handog'

ABS-CBN delivers the best in OPM music with its songwriting competition, "Himig Handog."

The country's biggest and first multi-media songwriting competition returns with last year's well-received theme: "Himig Handog Love Songs."

Like last year and in the previous "Himig Handog" competitions, aspiring composers are in for a treat, with exciting prizes and maximum exposure for their songs.

Aside from having a recording cut in the Star Records album, the songs will be extensively featured across the different platforms of the network like on its TV shows and plugs, Star Cinema movies, as well as airplay on dwRR 101.0 For Life! and in the whole country via M.O.R. My Only Radio For Life.

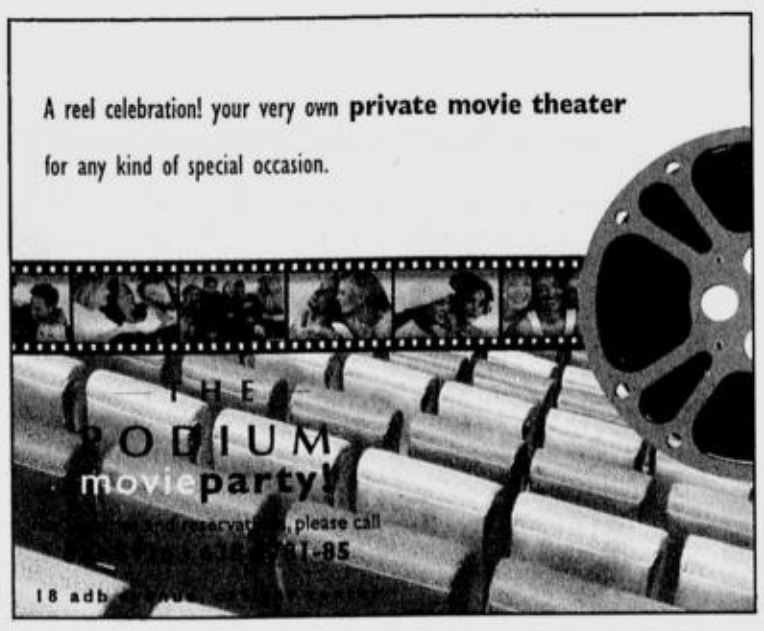
Last year's songfest album has been certified platinum.

The 10 song finalists will also have music videos which will run on ABS-CBN and Myx.

The composers will have the chance to win one or all of the interactive Choice Awards: listeners' choice award through land line voting, texters' choice award via SMS voting, and buyers' choice award through coupons found in the "Himig Handog Love Songs" CDs and cassettes, as well as Star Studio and Chalk Magazines.

Tune in to "Asap Mania" on Sunday, June 22, to find out more about "Himig Handog Love Songs."

SHOW TIME



Entertainment at Azzurro

AZZURRO Bistro and Lounge at Somerset Millennium now offers musical acts to entertain its diners.

Starting this month, Azzurro will have the upbeat strains of pop meister Arthur Manuntag on Tuesdays.

Wednesdays will feature renowned musician Romy Jorolan of Acoustic Jive, with his repertoire of folk, ballads and jazzed-up takes on the songs of James Taylor, Sting, Bread and other artists.

Diners looking for the groove of the '70s will get a dose of the contagious musical energy of Dr. Larry Mallari on Thursdays.

Fridays feature Lush and Lounge, with guest DJs, whose music is tailor-made for the house-loving set and those who like to chill out with their favorite cocktail.

All these while enjoying Azzurro's sumptuous flavors prepared by Chef Philip Golding, who is inspired by the freshness and heartiness of Spanish, Italian, French and Greek cuisine.

Azzurro Bistro and Lounge is on the 2nd floor of the Somerset Millennium Hotel on Aguirre Street in Legaspi Village, behind the Asian Institute of Management).

Call 889-0569.

On the ground floor is Chimes, which serves Singaporean and Malaysian dishes.

JOROLAN

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THE HULK PG13 2:10,5:10,8:10	THE HULK PG13 12:20,3:20, 6:20,9:20	THE HULK PG13 12:55,3:55, 6:55,9:55
THE HULK PG13 11:45,2:45, 5:45,8:45	BRUCE ALMIGHTY PG13 1:00,3:10,5:20, 7:30,9:40	THE HULK PG13 1:30,4:30, 7:30,10:30

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Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7.	
Ali 1	PANGARAP KONG IBIGIN KITA
Ali 2	SANIB
Ali 3	BERTUD NG PUTIK
Ali 4	THE HULK
Ali 5	THE HULK
Ali 6	BRUCE ALMIGHTY
Ali 7	TANGING INA

ARANETA COLISEUM	
JUNE 16,18,20	WORLD SLASHER CUP DERBY
JUNE 15 & 22	PBA GAMES
JUNE 28	NCAA OPENING CEREMONIES
JULY 12	UAAP OPENING CEREMONIES
JULY 13	UAAP GAMES

ELEPHANT WORLD	
ELEPHANT SHOW EVERY WEEKEND	
Fridays	Showtime: 5 PM
Saturdays	Showtime: 3 PM
Sundays	Showtime: 3 PM

MTRCB RATING R RESTRICTED
SUMAMBA NA ANG SAMBAYANAN!
PAHUHULI KA PA BA?
ara mina jay manalo maui taylor
ang huling birhen sa lupa

"Ang ganda, ganda ng pelikula! Mas maganda pa ito kaysa pelikulang Hima'a. I'm sure it will win a lot of awards." Armida Siguion-Reyna - Film Producer/ former MTRCB Chairman
"Brilliant! Definitely one of the best films of the year." Isah Red - Manila Standard
"I am amazed that Maui registers so effectively in her role... Ara also has many acting highlights ... I won't be surprised if she'd bag another best actress award for her compelling performance." Mario Bautista - Manila Bulletin/ Malaya/People's Journal
"Ang Huling Birhen Sa Lupa will draw the crowds and most of the trophies in the awards night!" Edgar Cruz - Daily Tribune/ Star Studio
"It's bold, it's very well crafted with excellent performances! Definitely Lamangan's best so far!" Ed Pacheco - PM
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Sa TV - big hit ang mga bida!
Sa Film Fest - Big event ang pelikula!
Pangarap Ko Ang Ibigin Ka
PELIKULA NI LOUIE LAGDAMEO IGNACIO
VIVA
NESCAFÉ Tim Tam LEONARDO DUNKIN' DONUTS Rexona
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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE
MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY - LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SEX DRIVE / JAIL BRIDE
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	ALAB NG LAHI
B	BERTUD NG PUTIK
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	PANGARAP KO ANG IBIGIN KA
CINEMA-2	HULING BIRHEN SA LUPA
CINEMA-3	ALAB NG LAHI
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HULK
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HULK
CINEMA-6	MATRIX RELOADED
CINEMA-7	BIGAY HILIG
CINEMA-8	OPERATION BALIKATAN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HULK
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HULK
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SANIB
CINEMA-12	ANG TANGING INA
CINEMA-14	BERTUD NG PUTIK
CINEMA-15	PANGARAP KO ANG IBIGIN KA
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
CINEMA 2	PANGARAP KO ANG IBIGIN KA
CINEMA 3	HULK
CINEMA 4	SANIB
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

La Salle concert

LA SALLE Greenhills Class '79 recently kicked off its pre-silver anniversary celebration by launching the Silverde Foundation and the first of a series of concerts featuring sexy star Aubrey Miles at Ratsky's in Tomas Morato, Quezon City.

"Silverde, the last of the '70s," the launch was attended by some 800 guests, friends and supporters of the class.

Chaired by Randy Santiago who was also a member of La Salle's Kundirana, LSGH class of '79 is composed of members who are notable names in the fields of entertainment, business, media and the medical profession.

'Coffee Talk' turns 1

"COFFEE Talk" celebrates its first anniversary with a one-of-a-kind musical-comedy special.

Host Cheri Mercado jams with the hottest young band on the concert circuit, Freestyle, as the band rehearses for a gig at Tavern on the Square.

Then the show will go to the comedy club Comfort Room where Cheri trades gags with the improv comic group SPIT, led by Gabe Mercado.

"Coffee Talk" airs 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, on the ABS-CBN News Channel (ANC SkyCable 21/ Home Cable 32).

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OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2003
opens June 11, 2003

Bombo Radyo dominates the region

SHOW TIME

"BOMBO Radyo iti agpaysu nga number one!" exclaims a middle-aged Ilocano when asked recently which radio station was the most dominant in the region.

"This is the same sentiment nationwide," says Herman Z. Basbano, AVP/COO AM Division of Bombo Radyo Philippines.

A proof of Bombo Radyo's indisputable airwave supremacy is its series of nationwide promos that never fail to generate millions of entries year-in and year-out.

"For the record, the network has practically 'invented' nationwide promos and has set records in the radio industry in terms of entries generated, and these records remain to be unchallenged," reveals Rogelio Florete, Jr. Bombo's executive vice president.

It is not only the reputed "combo culture" that has endeared the radio network to the masses, but it is Bombo Radyo and Star FM's unique blend of its highly regarded radio programming as well. Bombo Radyo's no-nonsense tackling of the most raging issues, coupled with Star FM's meticulously selected songs are what makes the radio network unbeatable.

"Our songs are a smooth blend of pop and adult contemporary understood and appreciated by our target audience," discloses Orly Pangcog, senior area manager for the FM division who has a keen ear for good music.

Despite the onslaught of the lingering worldwide economic meltdown, Bombo Radyo Philippines has continued to lord it over for the past decade while practically maintaining its manpower complement, as differentiated from major radio networks that drastically cut-down on its manpower by 50 percent in order to survive.

'Acoustic Showdown' at Ratsky Morato

FOLLOWING a highly successful musical showdown, Private Eyes Entertainment Productions and Silverde Foundation La Salle Greenhills Batch '79 bring back Jimmy Bondoc and Nyoy Volante in another face-off in "Acoustic Showdown Part Two," June 21 (Saturday) at Ratsky Bar, Tomas Morato Avenue, Quezon City. Show starts 10 p.m.

Jamming with Manila's most sought-after acoustic sensations are DJ Mic and the hottest R & B bands in the metropolis–Manos and Essence. Adding spice to the evening are guest appearances of TV personalities.

"Acoustic Showdown Part Two" promises to be another all-out musical offering from the entertainment industry's most promising recording artists.

The show is part of the Silver Jubilee celebration of the La Salle Greenhills Batch '79 headed by Randy Santiago.

For ticket reservations, call Private Eyes at 713-9901/07 or Ratsky Morato at 373-9881 to 83.

Busy month for Jed

ILONGGO singer Jed Maddela is up on his toes this month as he does the rounds of top bars and music lounges for his regular gigs.

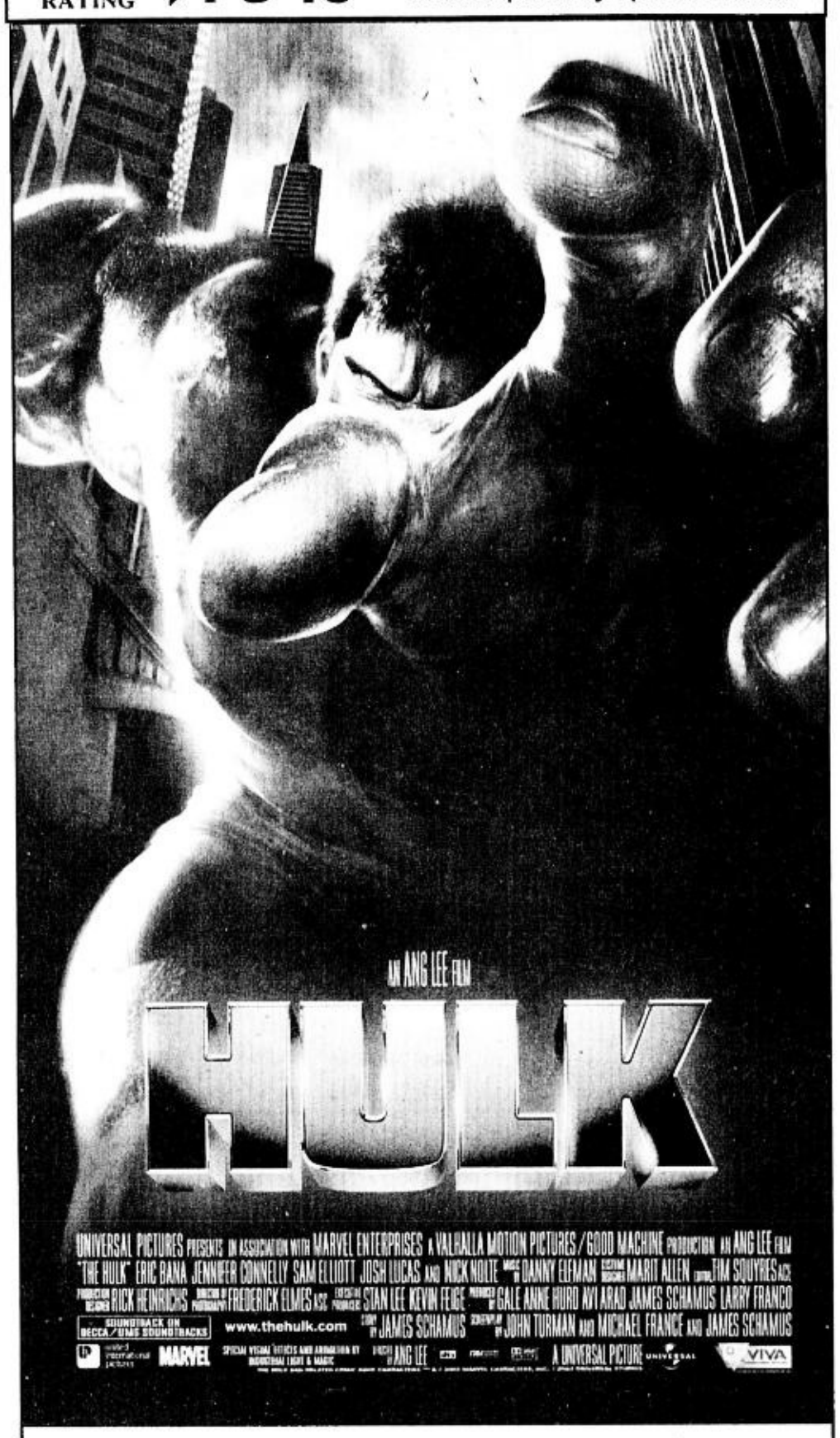
Jed has a full calendar of shows with fellow Primeline artist Gail Blanco and the Prime Council Band.

He will be at the Conservatory of Peninsula Manila on June 23 and 30, Strumm's Makati on June 26, Arriba in Libis, Quezon City on June 20.

Jed is now preparing to record his debut album under Universal Records.

JED MADDELA

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will be allowed in accompanied by a parent or adult.



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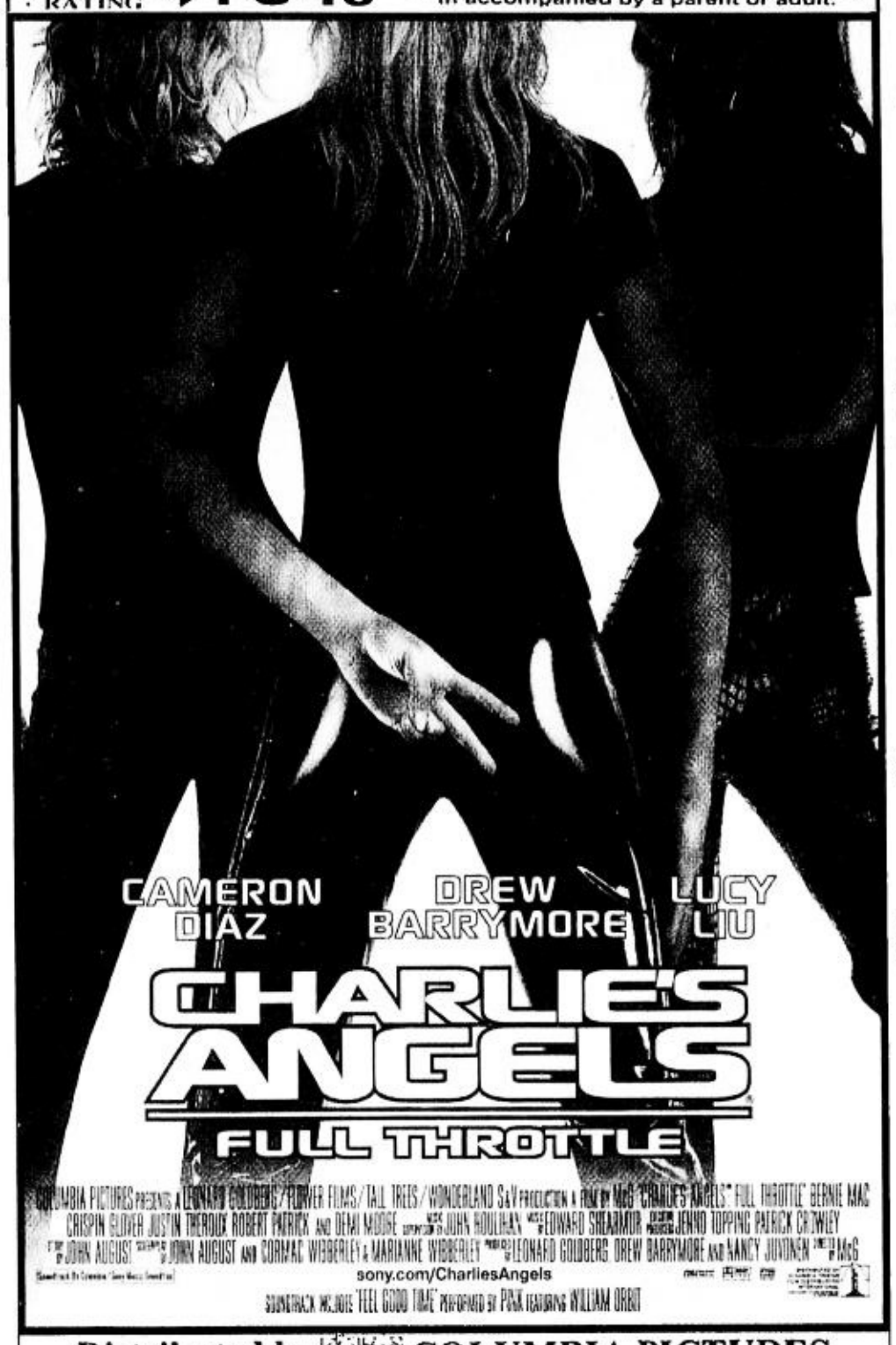

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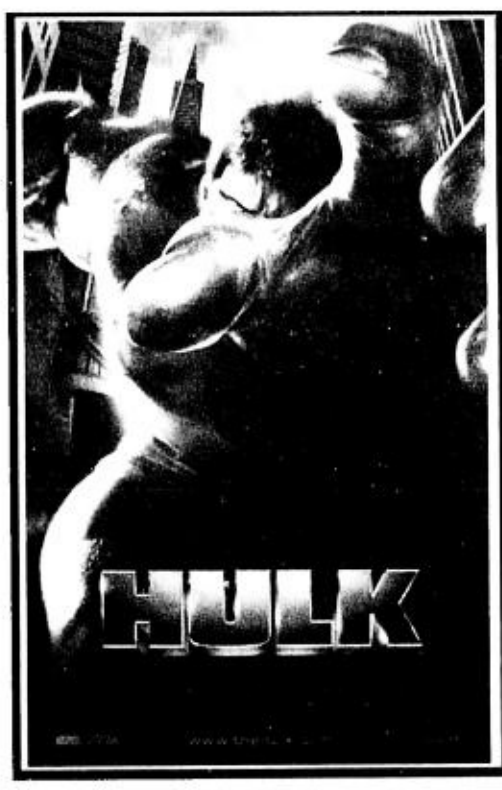

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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

SITTING area in the master bedroom is confined to earth colors.

THE PENTHOUSE with helipad and guesthouse

From nondescript to exceptional

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Chito Vecina

TRANSFORMING an old, unused space into a picture-perfect home several floors above the metropolis is nothing new to architect Gerry Contreras. He had done it before when he undertook with his team the difficult task of restoring and converting the rundown roof-deck of a family-owned building in Manila into a series of modern living spaces.

Still, Contreras' ability to turn an otherwise idle space into a tastefully appointed home is amazing. This time around, it took him and his team six months to transform the top floor and penthouse of an office building on Makati Avenue into his idea of Oriental living, complete with 18th-century scrolls, chairs and cabinets from China, bronze statues of Hindu deities from India and modern furniture pieces from the Philippines. Also on display are several accent pieces from Thailand and Cambodia.

"Almost every item was inspired by and sourced from Asia," says Contreras, as we make our way through a foyer made of black granite that doubles as a walkway sandwiched between two Balinese-inspired indoor ponds. "The only noticeable elements from Europe are the Italian marble and travertine floors that make up the elevator lobby and most of the entire house."

Sleek

The spacious lobby is yet another testament to Contreras' genius in turning an otherwise obscure section into a sleek receiving area. Even the old service elevator has been overhauled and now functions as his exclusive conduit to the underground parking lot.

"I had the elevator cleaned, repainted and outfitted with mirrors, granite floors and metal trimmings," Contreras says. The lobby's nondescript tiles also had to go in favor of Italian travertine and marble floor lined with black serperdiante. The pattern is repeated inside the house.

"I had to redo everything, short of removing the building's structural beams," Contreras says with a chuckle.

Chairs, console tables and lit scrolls from China provide visitors with a preview of things to come. Contreras derived inspiration from the gates of the Forbidden City, and came up with a smaller, more modern version in the form of double door made of narra and accented with iron buttons and hammered iron sheets. But one has to pass through the Balinese walkway to witness the main event.

Lit scented candles in square-shaped glass containers line both sides of the walkway, while concealed lighting beneath both sides of the walkway lends an added glow to the indoor pools. A pair of mini fountains and circular marble slabs crowned with faux lotus plants add to the ponds' Balinese feel.

Water flows on both sides of a slate wall between the main door, under the watchful gaze of a bas-relief image of the Buddha on the right wall and a bronze sculpture of Hindu goddess Natarajah set on a pedestal at the opposite end of the walkway. Several sheets of narra latticework, which Contreras designed

FROM/D2

onstage 2nite

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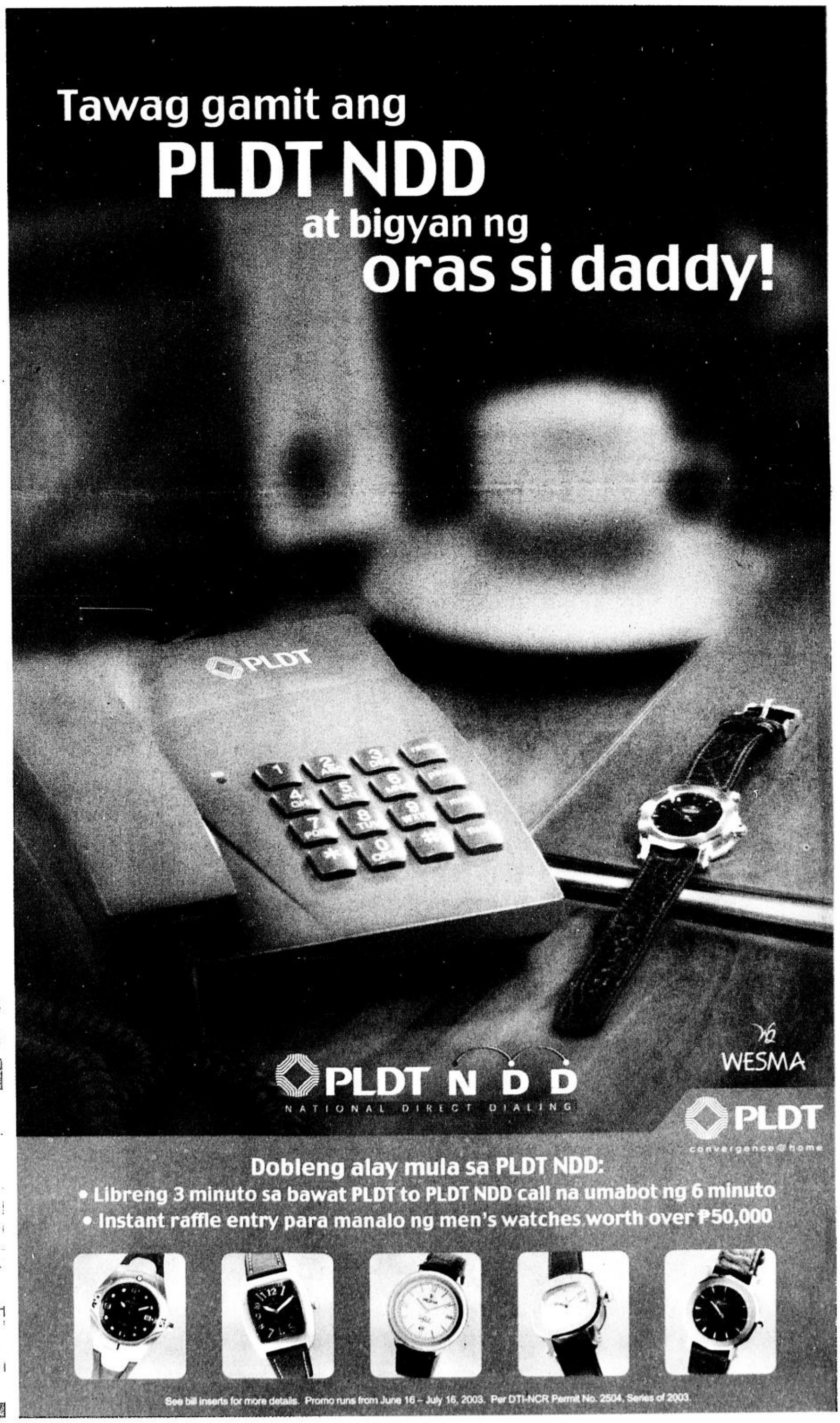


THE ELEVATOR lobby with Italian marble and travertine floor, Chinese furniture and lit scrolls

DOUBLE door inspired by the gates of the Forbidden City leads to the inner foyer that doubles as walkway between two indoor ponds.

MODERN furniture and acc

CANDLES and faux plant arrangements add warmth to the setup.

TABLE runner made of Thai silk and faux plant arrangement by Leo Almeria accent the black grand piano.

From nondescript to exc

From page D1

himself, frame and break the monotony of the glass windows.

"To set the foyer's walls apart from the rest of the house," says Contreras, "I chose a different shade of red that contrasts well with the black granite."

Most of the walls are like a blank canvas painted off-white. Behind the red wall that separates the rest of the house from the foyer, are the living and dining areas. A pocket garden beyond the dining area leads to a bigger garden one flight of stairs up. With its own den, guesthouse and, yes, helipad, the roofdeck is a story in itself.

If anything, the place is an ideal party venue, offering as it does a bird's eye view of the Makati skyline and beyond. Guests can take a dip in the swimming pool. But this is certainly no place for the lovelorn and those with plenty of enemies. In some sections, for instance, only a series of flower boxes separates the elevated venue from the streets below. Scary indeed.

Contreras' penchant for barely-there divisions is evident in the main house. To distinguish, for instance, the formal living room from the dining area, he made used of such devices as a cove ceiling and indirect lighting.

"The living room is an island setting," he says.

Leo Almeria's life-like faux plant arrangements and the soft glow coming from strategically placed and "dimmable" pin lights have also made both the sala and the dining area favorite party venues among Contreras' friends.

Lighting

"Lighting plays an important role in interior design by helping you set the mood and accentuate certain pieces of art. Women, especially, love what they see in the mirror, thanks to the soft, indirect lighting," he says.

The indirect lighting extends to several doorjambs leading to the bedrooms and powder room. The "uplighter" in this case are found at the bases of the doors' frames fash-

ACCENT pieces from various parts of the Orient make for interesting counterpoints. A cove ceiling marks the spot designated for the living room.

Gerry Contreras transforms a middling roofdeck into something livable and striking

ioned from granite but made to look like dark hardwood.

Contreras also succeeds in mixing the modern with the traditional in the living room. The twin sofas and a set of ottomans, for instance, are upholstered in off-white and set off by dark wooden furniture and antique pieces from China.

The music room featuring a black grand piano is located between the living room and dining area. Contreras' attempt at combining elements from both east and west is also evident in an occasional setting composed of a round table with four upholstered revolving chairs in Oriental red from Scandinavia.

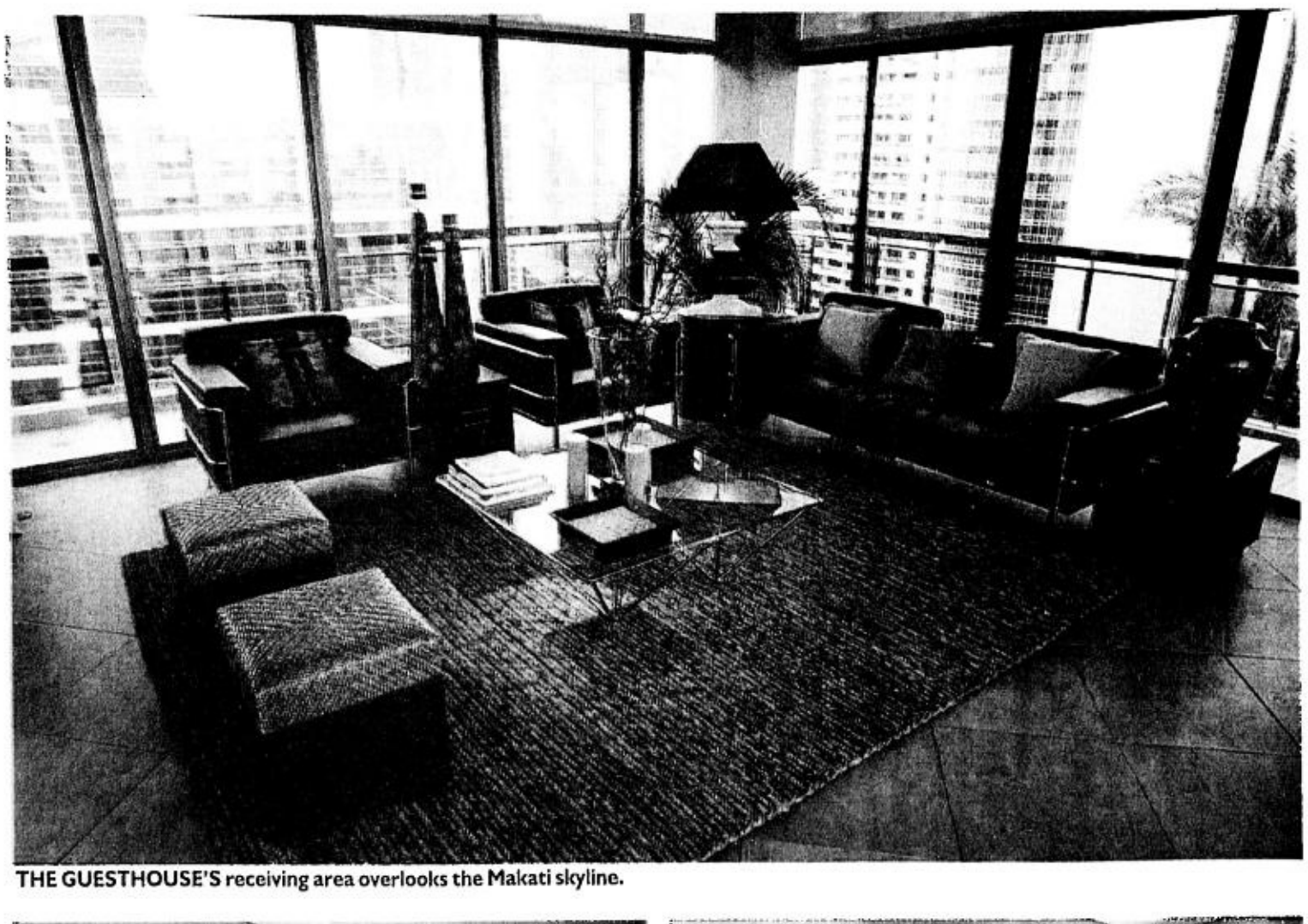
On a pair of granite pedestals on opposite sides of the music room sit figures straight out of a Chinese dynasty. Beyond the statues is a series of steps made of narra planks that lead to the elevated dining area.

Contreras designed the square dining table, with its clever interplay of a sofa, eight wooden-back side chairs and a pair of Ottomans, to accommodate as many as 16 people. Each sitting area follows a certain hierarchy based on one's age and stature.

"The sofa is for the host and three senior guests," he says. "The side chairs are designed for adults, while the Ottomans are for kids and teenagers."

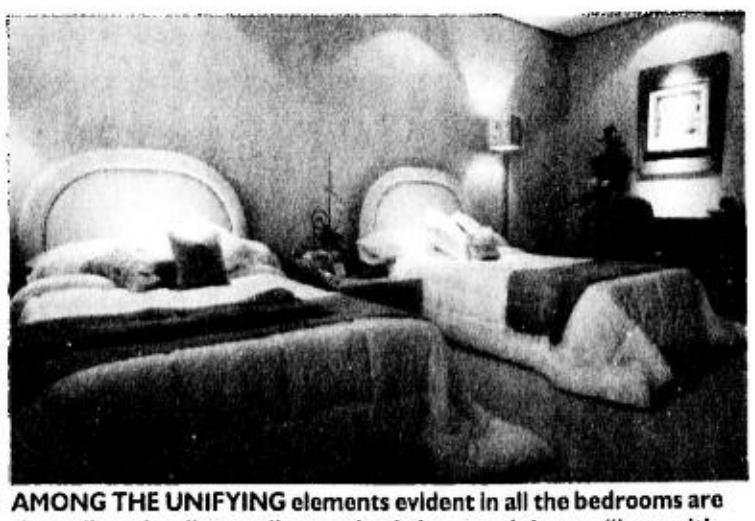
Contreras settled on a number of unifying elements in the bedroom that are far removed from the dramatic pieces found in the public areas: Walls with matching wall-to-wall carpeting in bone; sleek, export-quality furniture pieces made primarily of indigenous materi-

FROM/ D4



THE GUESTHOUSE'S receiving area overlooks the Makati skyline.

A SLEIGH bed in the master bedroom



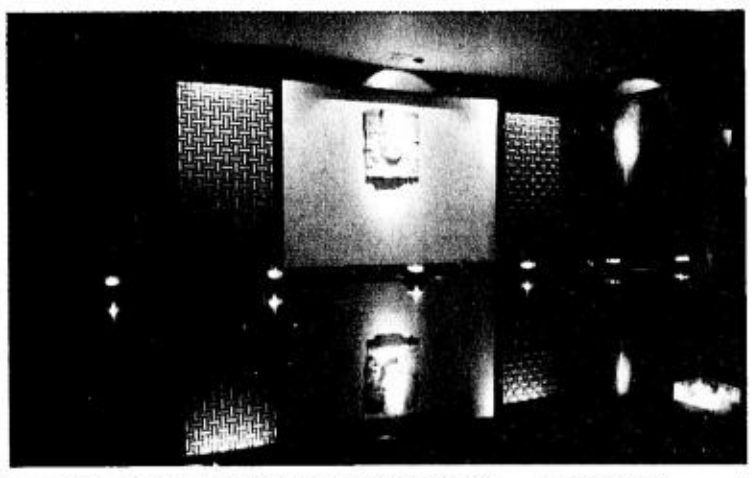
AMONG THE UNIFYING elements evident in all the bedrooms are the walls and wall-to-wall carpeting in bone and throw pillows with matching bed accents.

GEOMETRIC accent pieces echo the geometric pattern of the two headboards.

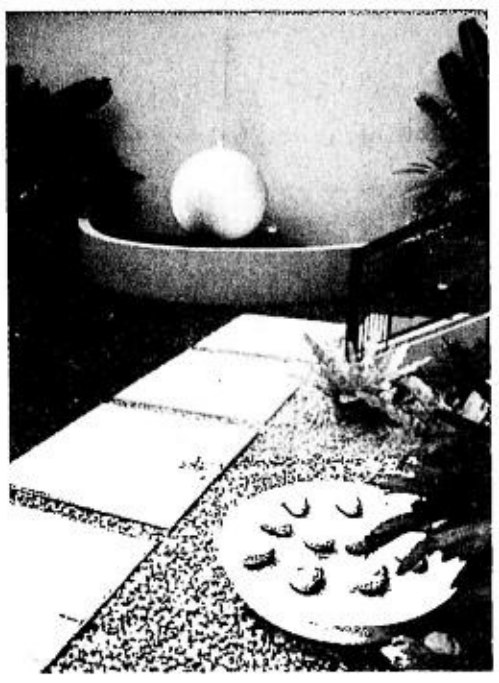
essories lend symmetry to the island living room.

ceptional

LIT scented candles in square-shaped glass containers line both sides of the walkway. On the other side is a pedestal with a bronze Hindu goddess.

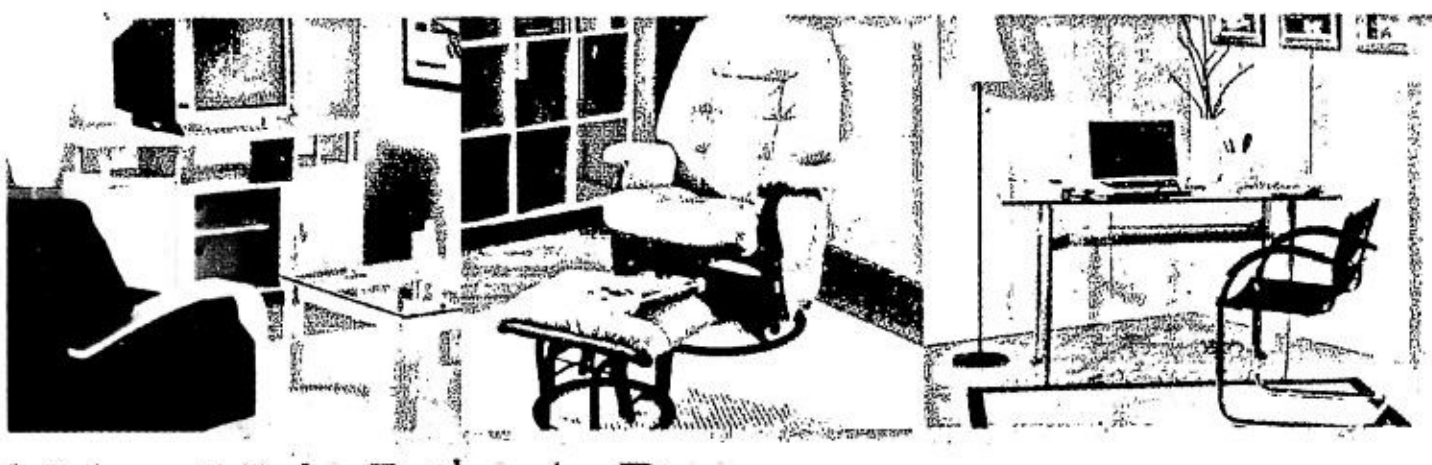


NARRA latticework frames bas-relief image of the Buddha.



ZEN garden, with stone and marble tic-tac-toe, leads to the roof-deck.

BALINESE daybed in the guesthouse



June 15 is Father's Day

DAD's corner

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AN OCCASIONAL setting composed of a round table and leather-upholstered revolving chairs from Scandinavia.

ARCHITECT Gerry Contreras

From nondescript to exceptional

From page D3

als from Legends and Far East Furniture; and matching throw pillows and bed accents.

Except for a few accent pieces of Chinese origin in the master bedroom, the space is devoid of elements in striking shades such as dragon red, emerald green and cobalt blue. The owner's preference for beige set off by brown and black pieces is very pronounced.

Says Contreras: "Working on this project has taught me one important lesson: how to keep a big area from looking cold." Imparting character on a nondescript venue requires a lot of time and money, but not even a limitless budget can make up for lack of creativity and imagination.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

SQUARE table with a sofa, wooden-back chairs and a pair of Ottomans.

Isang mensahe mula sa BIOGESIC PARACETAMOL BIOGESIC

Music marks mall's fun zone launch

SHANGRI-LA Plaza Mall launches Streetscape, the mall's al fresco dining and entertainment zone, today at the Grand Atrium. Tomorrow, reggae and rock fusion take centerstage. Ntwine will render songs from the '70s, '80s and '90s and Piña Colada with Latin-inspired music on June 22. Itchyworms will perform on June 27; Sound, June 28; and Orange N'Lemons, June 29. Call 633-7851.

GOINGS ON

PROMO. Avid Sony Shop Cebu is offering 0 percent interest deals on selected Sony items. The promo is ongoing until June 30. Shoppers may enjoy savings up to 15 percent on top of convenient payment terms. Avid Sony Shop Cebu is located at the Digital Festival exhibit area at the lower ground floor of SM City Cebu. Call (032) 231-3994.

SEMINAR. A seminar on integrated marketing communications principles and a review of selected mathematical models and measurement scales relative to advertising and promotion will be held today at Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati. Call 895-5735/2392/2363.

FESTIVAL. Sta. Lucia East Department Store presents its annual Denim and T-shirt Festival dubbed "Casual Mix" until June 30. Discounts of up to 70 percent are offered.

PHOTO COURSE. The Society of Portrait Photographers of the Philippines will hold a basic photo course on June 29 at Product Development and Design Center Philippines, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. Call 806-1346.

BOOK LAUNCH. A new book titled "Seven Card Stud With Seven Manangs Wild" will be launched on July 14, 5 p.m., at UP Bahay ng Alumni, Diliman, QC. The book is edited by Helen Toribio. Call 927-9858.

FLOWER ARRANGEMENT. The Flower Cart will offer flower arrangement seminars during the weekends of July and September. Call 256-9972/0881.

BOOK FAIR. The 7th Academic Bookfair will be held July 14-18, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., at UP Bahay ng Alumni, Diliman, QC.

INSTALLMENT SCHEME. At Abenson, your purchases worth P12,000 can be automatically applied to AIG's Buy Now, Pay Later installment scheme until July 15. The scheme will allow you to pay 60 days later unlike other credit cards.

OPENING. Following the success of its first two branches at Pasong Tamo in Makati and Meralco Avenue in Pasig, MC Home Depot recently opened its third and biggest outlet at the Fort Bonifacio Global City. To mark its opening, MC Home Depot at The Fort will have a 10-day sale, as well as special-interest activities such as flower and fauna exhibitions, pottery-painting sessions, candle-making. The grand launch on June 25 will be highlighted by celebrity performances.

EXHIBIT. Kish, the home furnishings store, will have its Artists in Residence program. Featured artists include Archion Architects, a multi-discipline design firm headed by architect Daniel Lichauco and Peter Ong, which will have an exhibit until July 6; painter Kiko Escora; designer Ernest Santiago in August; and photographer Raymond Isaac in September.

Beauty LIFESTYLE Trend Clothing

Dressing the part

By Anton San Diego

IF THERE is one fashion designer in Manila who dresses the part (i.e. perfect ensemble, classic, elegant lines), it is Carla Sibal.

STYLE EYES

This slim, petite and pretty designer has been designing her own line, Baghera, for more than 10 years now.

After studying at Parson's, the prestigious

DRESSING/ E2

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Work It Out	*workitou*	*Beyonce Knowles*
I'm With You	*imwithu*	*Avril Lavigne*
Sk8er Bol	*sk8erbol*	*Avril Lavigne*
Save Me	*savemerz*	*Remy Zero*
Get Ur Freak On	*geturfre*	*Missy Misdameanor Elliot*
How You Remind Me	*howyou*	*Nickelback*
Unwell	*unwell*	*Matchbox 20*
Come Away With Me	*comeaway*	*Norah Jones*
Hdden Agenda	*hiddenag*	*Craig David*

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IN HER FAVE JEANS. Carla, wearing Earl jeans, with son Mito

PIT STOP. Sitting in a Porsche on the way to Cortina D' Ampezzo

Dressing the part

Designer Carla Sibal says her style is rooted in craftsmanship and restrained luxury

From page E1

fashion school, Carla apprenticed for the late Margareta Ley, the former designer for Escada. She then moved to Pierre Balmain. After months of apprenticeship, she came home and worked for the Dior franchise, which was then carried by Rustan's.

Like all designers filled to the brim with creative and artistic juices, she took the next leap and started her own line. Today, her successful shop at the Glorietta mall carries formal evening wear and ready-to-wear bridal gowns.

Her personal style is very clean, understated and classic. It is something along the line of Banana Republic and Club Monaco.

She likes spending her weekends in her beach house is Nasugbu, Batangas. She has a son from a former marriage, Mito Fabie. At present, this talented and creative lady has a special someone in the person of Leo Brand, a German national.

Define style?

Style is an all-encompassing trait one acquires through integrating timeless principles of balance, beauty and culture. In the everyday norms of life, it is but a reflection of these principles that one imbibes in the course of a lifetime.

Describe your personal style?

I would like to think that my sense of personal style is rooted in the fundamentals of good craftsmanship and tasteful yet restrained luxury.

Do you think you are stylish?

Only to a certain extent.

If you were to make a best-dressed list who would be in it?

Carol Petrie, Carolyne Roehm, Camille Micellie, Princess Marie-Chantal of Greece, Plum Skies.

Who are your favorite local/international designers?

Local: Inno Sotto; foreign: Valentino, Vera Wang.

What did you wear on your wedding day?

A classic *piña* Filipiniana gown.

What is your biggest extravagance?

Taking time off from work to be with family and friends.

What do you wear to work?

My track suit and sneakers.

Secret shops?

Local: boutiques in Makati; international: Bergdorf Goodman, Saks Fifth Avenue

How has your mother influenced your style of dressing?

Being a rather trendy dresser, my mother has taught me how to integrate trendy pieces with a classic wardrobe.

A woman dresses to...?

Feel good, look good and express her individuality.

Style tips?

Invest in items that are timeless and made very well, from furniture to clothes and makeup.

Beauty secret or regimen?

You can never go wrong with having a balanced life, eight hours of sleep and eight glasses of water a day.

If you could have access to anyone's wardrobe, whose would it be?

Gwyneth Paltrow.

What has been your biggest fashion faux pas?

Attending a formal dinner in a gown with everyone coming in trouser suits.

What is on your wish list right now?

A chinchilla coat for winter.

Which era would you have wanted to live and dress in?

The '60s. It embodied an era of elegance, restraint and class.

How would you define being a Filipina in the 21st century?

Liberating. Filipino women have seemingly drawn more power from within and become unafraid to claim their independence and individuality.

E-mail the author asd_world@hotmail.com

O SOLE MIO. In Venice wearing Banana Republic top and pants

OPERA WEAR. Watching Don Giovanni in Salzburg, Austria wearing her own design for Baghera.

ROYAL FRIENDS. After the opera, dining with Prince Philip and Claudia Hoermann at Salzburg's Goloener Hirsch.

CARLA Sibal from the book "Images" by Patrick Rosas. Photographed by Jun de Leon

CHIC CHART

Toiletries

Shampoo/conditioner: Kerastase
Toothpaste: Ajona Stomaticum
Soap: L'Occitane
Scent/Perfume: Czech & Speake Rose Cologne

Makeup

Lipstick: Hermes Rouge
Moisturizer: La Prairie creme caviar
Blush: Giorgio Armani Fluid Sheer
Foundation: Chanel Teint Fluide
Eye Shadow/Mascara: Giorgio Armani
Sunscreen: La Roche-Posay Anthelids XL

Clothes

Jeans: Gap and Earl Jeans
Top: Baghera beaded cami's in haute couture fabrics
T-shirt: Banana Republic
Pajamas: Natori
Lingerie: Huit

Accessories

Handbag: JP Tod's
Watch: Cartier's Men Tank Americaine chronograph in gold
Shoes: JP Tod's
Sneakers: Puma's tan suede mostros

Hi-Tech

Mobile Phone: Nokia
Computer: Apple G4 cube
TV: Sony

Others

Restaurant: Villa Cipriani in Asolo, Italy; The Tivoli—Mandarin Oriental
Magazine: Lucky, Town & Country, Harpers Bazaar
Bottled water: San Pellegrino and Evian
Florist: 1816
Soda: Schweppes with campari
Gym: Polo Club Gym
Lifestyle store: Collette
Music: Opera, jazz, chill-out
Coffee/ Tea: Lavazza coffee or Starbucks

'Look & Learn' seminar for hairstylists

NU Punk

HAIRDRESSERS recently got an up-close and personal view of the latest "Essential Looks" collection by Schwarzkopf as rendered by Manila's top hairdresser and Schwarkopf Philippine Ambassador Alex Carbonell.

The hair show-cum-seminar was dubbed "Look & Learn" and was held at the Edsa Shangri-La Plaza Hotel.

Carbonell, who recently underwent rigid training in Bangkok under Schwarzkopf regional training manager Robert Seah, showed his fellow hairdressers the right cut and color techniques as well as the proper makeup and wardrobe for the five different trends in the collection.

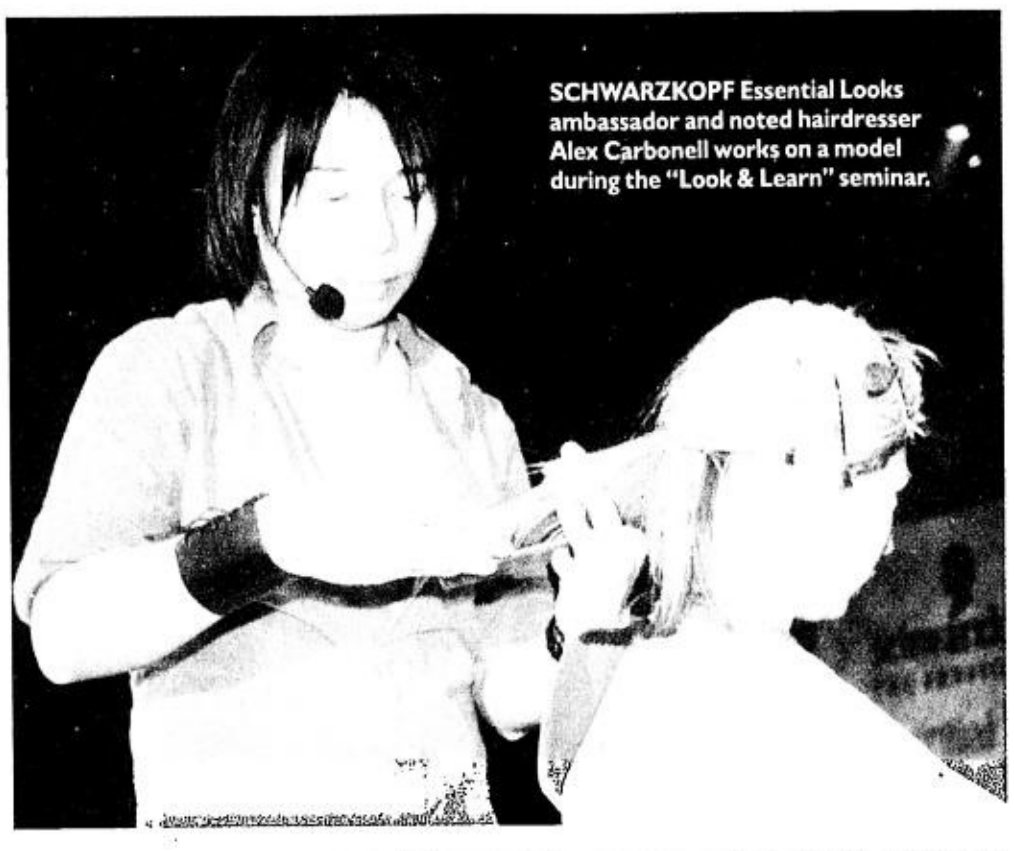
A mini-fashion show was held after the demonstrations. Featured were the Feather, Nu Punk, Back to Blacks Chelsea Girl and Dream Icon looks, which drew their key influences from an eclectic mix of catwalk shows, Hollywood icons and cutting-edge street style.

Carbonnell, the creative director for hair and makeup of Propaganda Salon and creative learning director for hair and makeup of Fix Training Center, used various Schwarzkopf products such as OSIS Sherbet, Mess Up, Grip, Frame, Tex It and Upland and Igora Royal.

Schwarzkopf's "Essential Looks," a magazine published bi-annually, is an important reference and source material for hairdressers, stylists and makeup artists alike.

Schwarzkopf products are exclusively distributed in the Philippines by Top Style Marketing with offices at Eisenhower Condominium, Greenhills, San Juan. Call 726-8507 to 08 and 722-02783.

THE FEATHER look



SCHWARZKOPF Essential Looks ambassador and noted hairdresser Alex Carbonell works on a model during the "Look & Learn" seminar.

YEAR 5
Is Harry ready?
Are you?
Harry Potter
HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX
BY J.K. ROWLING
JUNE 21, 2003

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La Batterie 6:30pm the biggest Drum Jam ever happens on the street with K-han artists and Pinikpikan percussionists
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Closing 2:30am All-Star Blues Jam
Opening 7:15 Bo Razon & Grupo Eleggua
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Lancôme Blanc Expert is a whitening skin-care line that rejuvenates damaged skin

MIRANDA, 17, starts her skin-damage prevention regimen early.

STEP 1. Gentle cleansing with Blanc Expert XW foaming wash.

STEP 2. Whitening toner to prep skin to absorb treatment efficiently.

THE MORE intensified Blanc Expert Night Cream for bedtime

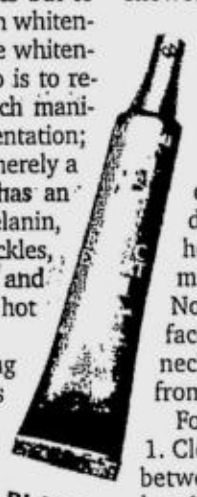
PHOTOS: BETOY JOHNSON

BLANC Expert XW Whitening Cleansing Foam

Cosmetics line that recognizes Asian needs

ASIAN women have great skin in general. Cosmetic companies figure it may not all be due to genetics but to Asian preoccupation with whitening products. What these whitening solutions actually do is to reverse skin damage, which manifests in the form of pigmentation; the whitening result is merely a side effect. Asian skin has an abundant amount of melanin, which accounts for freckles, dark post-pimple marks, and sunspots, thanks to our hot sun.

Lancôme, recognizing Asian skin needs, has launched extensive research in their Paris and Tokyo laboratories to nip melanin production in the bud. The aim is not to whiten us drastically but to restore damaged skin. This resulted in Blanc Expert (BE) XWII, which is sold exclusively in Asian countries.



BLANC Expert XWII Advanced Whitening Essence

My personal test of the product showed visible results in five days. My skin looked whiter and brighter and the foundation became an option instead of a need.

The pictures here show our model Miranda as she demonstrates step by step how to prevent and reverse mild to severe sun damage. Note: What you apply on the face, you also apply on the neck because this also suffers from sun damage.

For morning and night: Step 1. Cleansing. We have a choice between the BE whitening soap bar (P1,485) or the BE cleansing foam (P1,645). The cleansing foam is the more popular choice for the face as it is less messy while the soap is popular for the body.

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

Step 2. There are three toners (P1,925 each) to choose from to suit your particular skin type. Miranda has normal/combination skin so she uses toner #2. Toner # 1 is for oily and acne prone and # 3 is for sensitive and dry.

Step 3. BE Advanced Whitening Spot Corrector (P4,065) is the most important product in this step. It is responsible for evening out the complexion and inhibiting melanin production so discoloration will be kept at bay. This is to be applied all over the face and neck, not just the visibly discolored areas. Apply five dots (three for T-zone and two on cheeks) then blend all over face with gentle strokes. I use two spots in the neck area.

Step 4. BE XWII Advanced whitening Anti Dark Circles Treatment (P2,965) is a non-greasy eye cream that prevents and smoothes out wrinkles, but its claim to fame is that it corrects dark under-eye circles, which so many eye creams have failed to do. I have noticed no breakouts in the eye area as is my usual problem with eye creams. Those with dark under-eye circles have noticed some improvement as early as one week of use.

For day only: Step 5. BE XW Extra Whitening Hydrating Fluid (P2, 965) is a non-greasy moisturizing lotion absorbed easily by face. It protects skin from the sun. It also works to inhibit melanin production. Or Lancôme UV Expert SPF 50; this is not included in the BE range, but I feel it should be. It goes on matte while hydrating the skin and acts as a great foundation primer. I use it underneath loose powder and it stays on all day. I feel no need for foundation after this. It does not smell or sting the eyes when I sweat. FYI: I use it indoors as well as out faithfully because fluorescent light has UVB.

For evening: Step 5. BE XW Extra Whitening White Renovator (P3,190) is applied before bedtime after the spot corrector and eye cream. It maximizes skin repair while we sleep.

E-mail the author at kinnysalas@yahoo.com

BLANC Expert XWII Anti-Dark Circles Eye cream. Fades dark circles due to pigmentation with noticeable results after seven days.

NON-GREASY Blanc Expert Fluid for day

Robinsons Department Store

Clinic offers personal acne medication

DERMCLINIC says it is important to understand that acne control and management is best left in the hands of a licensed skin doctor.

Leaving your skin in the hands of inexperienced and lesser-educated therapists could do more harm, not to mention put your health and safety on the line.

The first step in controlling acne is knowing that there is no standard treatment that can be applied to all patients.

What works for one patient may not work for another. Because acne condition and patient predisposition varies, treatment should be individualized.

To control the number of painful lesions and to help manage the psychological stress and embarrassment, drug therapy is often the first choice for treating acne.

Dermatologists prescribe oral medications or over-the-counter products. But no product can totally get rid of acne.

There are no shortcuts. The best way to manage your acne is under the care of a dermatologist.

Dermclinic offers a wide range of individualized treatments designed to give patients the best medical results possible.

Call 818-6274.

Keeping your skin soft and smooth

THE COMING rainy season can bring about parched, overly dry skin.

Here are simple tips to keep your skin soft and smooth, courtesy of Avon's Skin-So-Soft Soft & Sensual Hand & Body Lotion.

Aside from your regular moisturizing bath regimen, apply lotion liberally all over your body. Give special attention to your knees and elbows, arms and legs.

Moisturize with a hand and body lotion at least twice a day. Apply after a bath, before you sleep, or anytime during the day when the skin feels dry.

For extra soft skin like a baby's, try applying lotion on your hands and feet, then wear gloves or socks over them overnight.

Drink six to eight glasses of water a day. Refrain from smoking, overexposure to the elements and excessive air-conditioning. A healthy lifestyle is always your best bet for smooth skin.

Real-life fashion for real-life woman

Karen Davila keeps herself grounded and well-donned, just like a Liz Claiborne woman

PERIWINKLE sleeveless top and cardigan, black slacks, black handbag and silk scarf

IN HER work as a broadcast journalist, Karen Davila covers real-life drama, struggling always to keep to the facts, investigate the truth and flesh out the issues that beset the country.

Amid the pressures, the fame and the occasional intrigues that come with being a TV personality, the 32-year-old keeps herself grounded.

Real life is, of course, being a mother to year-old David and wife to ABS-CBN news director DJ Sta. Ana.

"It's really all about time management," says Karen, who is field reporter on the current affairs program "The Correspondents," hostess of an afternoon radio show on dzMM, anchor of the nightly news program "Headlines" and spokesperson of an international educational support fund.

"Work will really take your time away from family, but you just have to know your priorities," Karen says.

That's why she sees to it she spends the morning with David before going to work in the afternoon, and comes home to have dinner with DJ and their son.

On weekends, if there is no fieldwork, she is with the family on an out-of-town trip or just at home reading a good book.

This struggle to keep oneself grounded, to keep things real, is right at the heart of Liz

REAL/ F2

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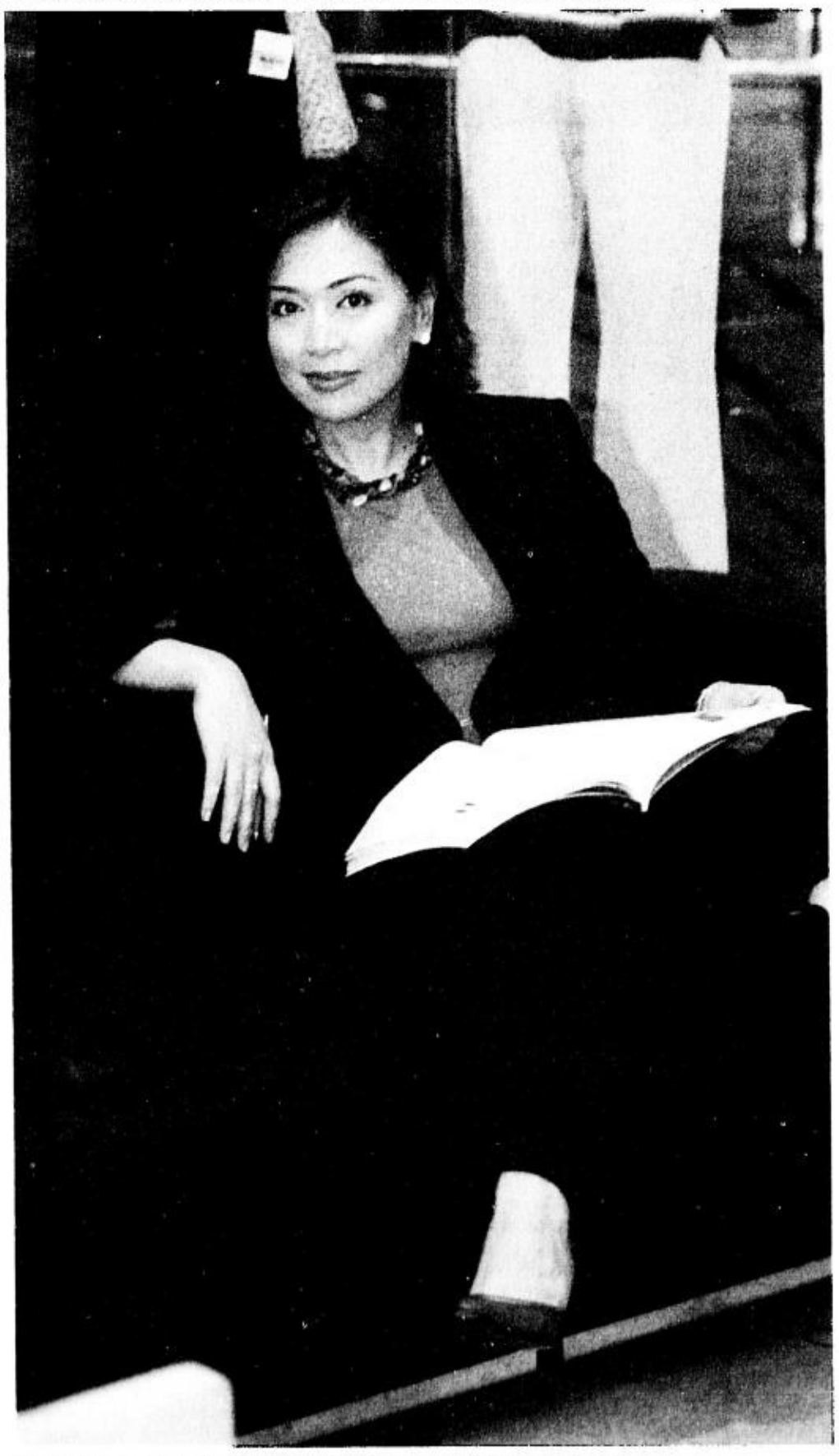
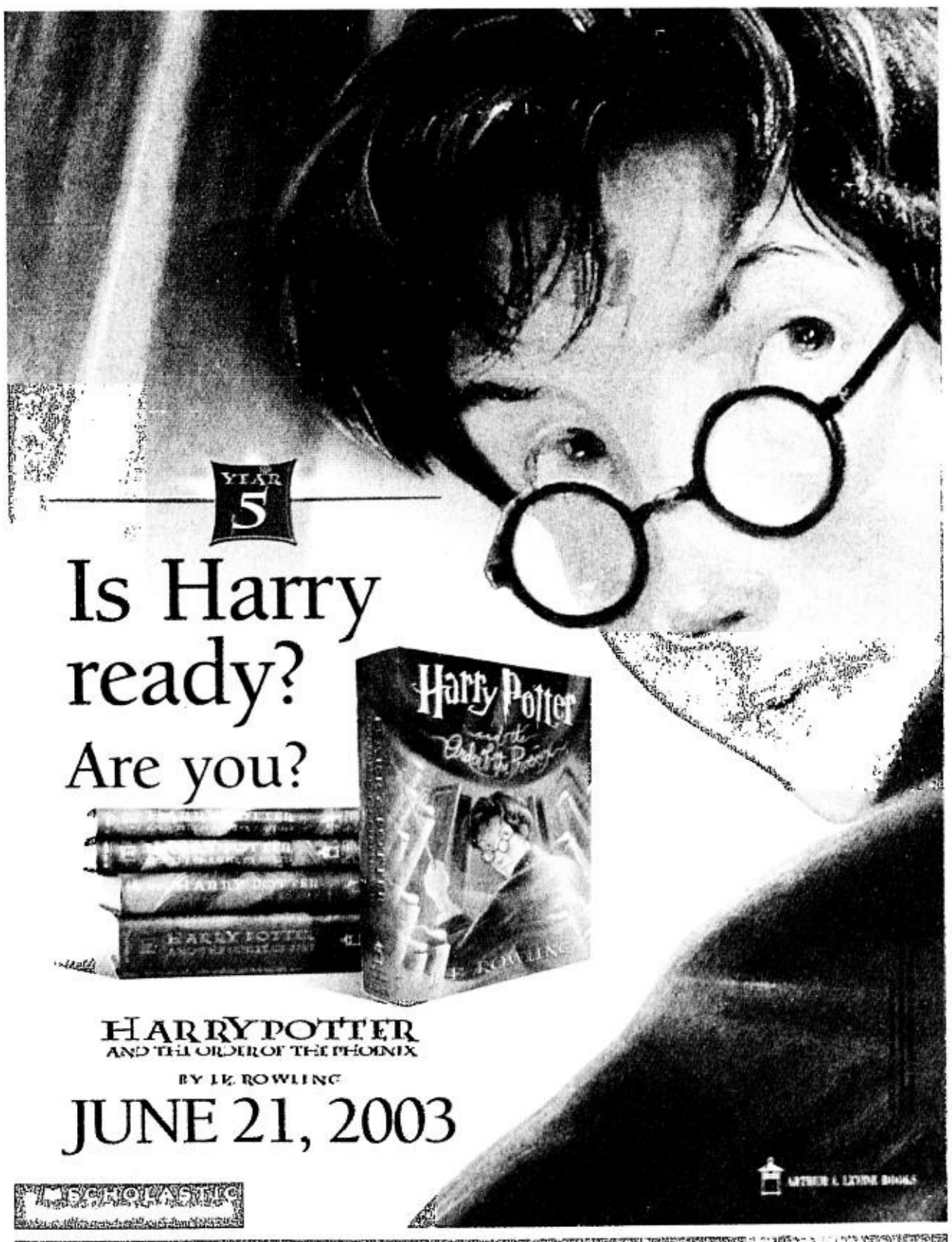


RED silk sleeveless top, black cotton blazer and black polyester pants



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Real-life fashion for real-life woman

From page F1

Claiborne Carefree, fashion for the woman with a million things to do, whose life is a carefully weighted balance of family, friends and work, and for whom quality, fuss-free clothing that can take her from morning till night is a God-send.

Liz Claiborne Carefree combines the latest looks with time-saving, easy-care fabrics. This features stain-free, wrinkle-resistant, non-iron clothing from khakis to the classic white shirt and are the perfect complements to the 2003 Liz Claiborne Collection, which showcases the finest in classic and casual chic clothing and accessories.

STRIPED three-fourth-sleeved shirt and gray pants with Teflon fabric protector

BEIGE Lycra tank, printed shirt, beige flat-front cropped pants and ivory bag

PHOTOS BY RANDY HORMILLOSA
STYLING BY ROSARIO HERRERA
MAKEUP BY JOANNE LINGAD
HAIR BY JEFF ROBLES
CLOTHES BY LIZ CLAIBORNE
SHOT ON LOCATION AT SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL,
LIZ CLAIBORNE AND DOME CAFE AT THE SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL

RP, global markets find local shoes a tight fit

Although home to Guinness World Records' biggest shoe, Marikina no longer shods Filipinos

By Ginggay Pajaro
Contributor

THE MARIKINA shoe industry is dying a slow painful death—smothered by cheap Chinese imports, in need of competitive modern technology and production methodology and starved of support. The problem is compounded by the poor work ethics in the industry.

Having been involved in shoe-making for some time now, I believe the industry is one of the country's most promising and inherently beautiful. It can also be competitive globally if given the support it needs by the government and the Filipino people.

The first Via Venetto retail store opened in the Greenhills' Manila Bank Arcade in 1973. My father, a former labor union president, could not get another job and my mother's salary as a faculty member of the University of the Philippines was not enough for the family.

From the start, my mother resolved that we would make not only beautiful but comfortably designed and durable shoes. We used only the best materials available and continuously and tirelessly improved our system, even innovating some methods.

We adopted as our motto: "We will not do with make do. *Hindi puwede ang puwede na*." Our shoes became the most expensive among the local brands but the consumers did not seem to mind.

Dying

But now our shoe exports are at their lowest in 10 years. The local market is flooded with cheap Chinese shoes and discount European castoffs with outdated designs.

But the Filipino, who always assumes that anything imported is better than our own, eagerly snapped up the imports. Now that China has joined the World Trade Organization, the industry's death could come sooner.

And yet only a couple of decades ago, Marikina shoes seemed well on their way to joining the world's best. Foreigners came to buy, to teach and to transfer technology. Marikina was the leading shoe exporter to the United States and several other countries.

But now the buyers have disappeared, frustrated and traumatized by Marikina's inability to keep commitments, to maintain quality and to change from the traditional pound-and-nail way of making shoes.

Comparable and competitive

In terms of style and design, the Philippine shoe industry has always stayed current. With the vaunted Filipino sense of style and flair for fashion, local shoemakers are quick to adopt and adapt to (even copy) the newest trends set by the world's fashion capitals.

In fact, there is hardly a true original Marikina design. A shoe-designing contest was held recently to encourage more Filipino original styles and using indigenous materials.

But product engineering, aside from design, has to be improved as well. The shoe must not only look good, but also feel good. In modern shoe factories in Europe, product research and development is done before the first drawing of a design is made.

Local shoemakers seem to be only concerned that the shoes look nice and flatter the customers' feet.

With the Filipinos' inherent creativity, artistry, keen fashion sense and readiness to adopt the newest trends, designing is one area where Philippine shoes can have a competitive advantage. Factories in China and Taiwan now hire many of our shoe designers, in fact.

I concede we cannot compete in the traditional leather footwear industry so I think we should concentrate on niche marketing. The cost of manufacturing shoes in this category in Europe and the US would be prohibitive. In fact, Rene Caovilla, a world-renowned Italian brand famous for its intricate, rich, labor-intensive designs, already explored the possibility of having uppers made here.

Too proud

Those of us in Marikina's shoe industry are very proud of our craftsmanship. Unfortunately, our pride has made many of us resistant to modernization. Some fear upgrading technology would involve high financing costs with no guarantee of recouping investment in this volatile economic times but others believe traditional ways can survive the challenge from cheap Chinese shoes.

Some shoemakers, basking in the glory achieved by their grandparents or parents, think that what worked in the past would still do today, in the age of globalization.

In many shoe factories, management is by intuition, and research and development are optional. The lack of support industries is taken as a given and workers who move from factory to factory, looking for the one that gives the most generous *bale*, is accepted as a fact of life.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, in fact, blames the industry for its dire straits. "The mode of production in Marikina hasn't changed. They haven't modernized and that is necessary to reduce costs," she says.

The Marikina shoe industry should take this as a call to arms to be better, bigger and produce more globally competitive shoes.

Never ending search

Via Venetto has always subscribed to this. We regularly go to the Micam in Milan, Mipel in Milan and GDS in Dusseldorf for the latest trends and new design ideas. After the fairs, we go to Milan, London, Dusseldorf and Paris to check out the current styles.

We bring some of our shoemakers during these trips to expose them to the latest styles, the latest aesthetic and technical developments. It is important to show our shoemakers that there is always much to learn. The trips are integral to our research and development.

This is why our designs are in step with the fashion capitals of the world. We also have an in-house designer, a University of the Philippines Fine Arts student.

For our leather, components and accessories, we go to the Linea Pelle. Exhibitors from all over the world, from tanners to shoelace makers to adhesive manufacturers display their products and latest innovations in this fair. A pair of Via Venetto shoes may have leather from Italy, sole from Germany, heels from France and buckles from Austria—but proudly designed and made by Filipinos.

Simultaneous with the Linea Pelle is the Simac, an equipment and machinery fair showcasing and demonstrating all kinds of tools and machines. The Simac is a window to the technology of the future in shoe making.

Modernize or perish

The Marikina shoe industry needs increased efficiency and higher productivity to compete in the global market and for this, they need to modernize in every way. Outdated equipment, antiquated production and management systems gave rise to existing problems. Production technology modernization will allow the shoe factories to make better and more shoes at less time and at lower costs.

Equal attention should be given to esthetics and design engineering. Producers should be constantly updated on raw materials, components and innovations in the shoemaking process. Workers should be trained on these new technologies.

If the Marikina shoe industry is to move forward, development of raw materials and support industries is needed. Without good leather, heels that do not break, shanks that will not bend, Marikina shoes cannot compete locally, much less in the global market.

Many medium and small factories often have to pay first rate prices for third-rate components.

Systems like consortium buying of imported raw materials can be adopted to reduce production costs. This requires close cooperation among shoemakers. And today, with their survival threatened, industry players are finally trying to present a unified front.

Rescue operation

On Monday mornings, shoemakers, traders and support industry people meet in the Marikina Munisipyo. They call their organization Sikapmo, short for Sigla ni Kapitan Moy, in honor of Laureano Guevarra a.k.a. Kapitan Moy.

First in its agenda is to resuscitate the Marikina shoe industry and stem the tide of cheap Chinese shoes. Sikapmo will launch a shoe brand Marquina by pooling their resources and consolidating their efforts. Members will share resources, material sourcing through cooperative bulk buying to lessen costs, share designs, use common shoe lasts and patterns. They will also adopt standard product quality requirements.

Marquina is an ambitious goal, especially since it will be a cooperative effort. Marikina's shoemakers have traditionally been jealous of their tools and trade secrets, stated in the good-natured slogan: "*Ipahiram ko na ang aking asawa, huwag lang ang aking hulma.*"

Moreover, to produce cheaper shoes, many factories have to restructure operations to streamline production.

This is easier said than done because it requires a change of attitude, retraining and reeducation of both factory owners and workers. There should be intensive and sustained orientation so they don't revert to *dating gawi*.

The local factories will have to make the investment and to take a chance. But they need government help.

The obstacles we face are not insurmountable. Many of the problems are of our own making. But I think it has finally dawned on us that if we cannot muster the will, we will not survive.

Sikapmo president Mahar Jardiolin noted the enthusiasm of the members to cooperate, to do something, to help. Mayor Marides Fernando has taken the industry's plight as a challenge for her administration. Through Rep. Del de Guzman, Congress has realized it cannot ignore the threat to the shoe industry's survival.

Local energy sources can reduce dependence on imported oil

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gaskell Nuyda

WE'VE always been told that geothermal energy was clean and renewable with no greenhouse effect emissions, the best alternative to fossil oil.

Sometimes, however, something goes wrong like when steam can no longer be generated. Then doubts crop up as to how renewable this energy really is. This happened at Tiwi Hot Springs in Albay some time ago which caused its closure. But the geothermal plant is still working, still generating steam away from the hot springs site where a geopark is now taking shape.

Came the invitation to visit another geothermal plant, this time the one straddling Makiling in Laguna and Banahaw in Batangas—better known as Mak-Ban. The visit was meant to give us a true picture of a renewable and environmentally-compliant geothermal plant, and we were glad to accept.

We don't intend to explain the mechanics of geothermal operations here but, for our purpose, it is enough to stress that geothermal energy is produced by the natural heat of the earth and is found in volcanic areas. Since production in Mak-Ban began in the '70s, it has been responsible for a significant share of the electrical capacity of the Philippines. Together with Tiwi, it represents about 25 percent of that capacity.

Operating Tiwi and Mak-Ban is Philippine Geothermal Inc. (PGI), a subsidiary of the giant energy developer UNOCAL (Union Oil Company of California). There are six other geothermal plants operated by other companies around the country apart from the two plants in Luzon. They make the Philippines the second (next to the United States) leading geothermal producer in the world.

As explained by Glenn U. Golla, PGI field operations manager, an important factor in geothermal operations is close monitoring of the wells' cleanliness and ensuring the facilities are running as they should. A well that bogs down diminishes the integrity of the plant and does not speak well of company efficiency.

Pipe city

The Mak-Ban area is unique in that it stretches out to three municipalities—Bai and Calauan in Laguna and Sto. Tomas in Batangas. Geothermal pipes, more than twice the size of most water pipes, snake their way around these towns, sometimes crossing busy intersections. To allow big vehicles to pass, some pipes are raised like welcome arches.

A geothermal plant, with its intricate pipe lines and valve systems, has a futuristic look, so that one almost expects to hear Star Trek's Captain Kirk ordering Scottie to "beam" him up.

Our interest, of course, centered on the plant's environmental aspects and it seems that here, precautions and environmental practices are strict. The main complaint of residents nearest the plant is the noise coming from wells being drilled.

According to Golla, guidelines of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), are followed to resolve the problem, meaning, when the noise becomes unbearable, residents must be relocated and kept away for whatever length of time is necessary. Their needs in their new location, like transportation, are provided for. They are also given the assurance that the houses and other property they left behind will be secured.

Waste disposal

Waste produced in a geothermal plant consists mainly of brine, scales (silica in brine), sludge, and that produced in laboratory work. They are segregated into hazardous and non-hazardous in the usual manner and stored in plastic bags and drums and placed in special areas where they are picked up by DENR-accredited third-party contractors.

The containers are regularly counted to make sure everything is properly disposed of. Among the containers are boxes of asbestos roofing material removed from the buildings to reduce health hazards. In case hazardous elements accidentally spill out of their containers, there is an industrial type shower installed in a strategic site so workers can neutralize affected parts of their bodies.

Not all the waste is disposed of in the same way. The plant also has its own landfill for ordinary household-type waste. The landfill is lined with clay so there is no leakage that could contaminate groundwater.

As geothermal drilling is a relatively new technology, mistakes are bound to happen. But every year, says Golla, new things are learned as well, improving operations and facilitating projects. One of the environmentally safe ways to maintain the wells, says Golla, is through re-injection of used or extra steam.

The steam is put back into specific geothermal wells called reinjectors. There, it undergoes something akin to recycling that renews the energy for continued use.

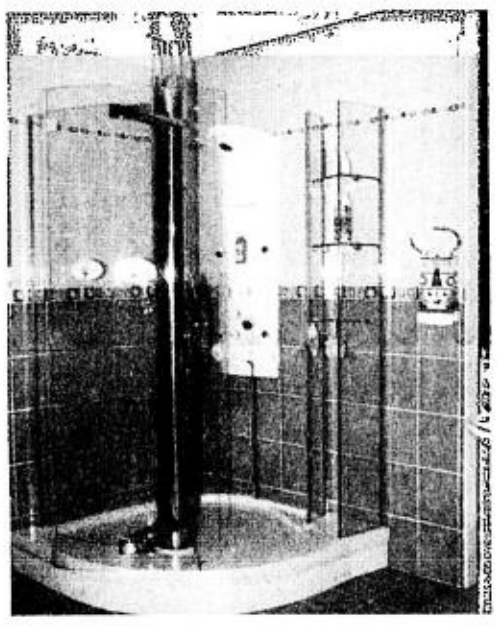
Asset Affairs

Along with environmental compliance, Mak-Ban also makes community relations a major concern. This is where the Asset Affairs department comes in. Manned by two specialists who work both for Tiwi and Mak-Ban, it is a particularly sensitive post. Antonio S. Espineda and Florencio Malijan, supervisor and assistant supervisor respectively, are tasked with developing the interest and goodwill of the townspeople, without which the project will have a hard time forging ahead. To make the company's presence welcome (a never-ending effort), the Asset Affairs department has drawn up programs for the benefit of all, especially the youth, like scholarships, training for community awareness and education, youth development. It also provides day care services, programs for health and nutrition, and sports activities.

There are several other places in the Philippines where geothermal energy could be developed, says Espineda, but it is not always possible to do so, especially if the community does not see how such a development can be essential to its lifestyle. Perhaps an information campaign in those areas would help. After all, we'd have less air pollution if our energy needs were supplied by steam generated right here, and the country would save millions of pesos if we stopped importing fossil oil. Something to think about, we must admit.

E-mail the author at dorisnuyda@yahoo.com

Store design makes 'browsing' easy



ELEGANT glass Huppe Shower Encloser with Shower Tray and Carnac Shower with Body Massage Jets

ARTESIAN Waterworks at The Podium, a lifestyle store, showcases bath-works in a free-flowing way.

It tries to give customers a chance to envision their bathrooms with the store's products and to get a feel of how products work.

The store carries well-known brands like Villeroy & Boch fixtures and wares from Germany, designer faucets from Dorn Bracht in Germany and Acqui in Italy, and ceramic tiles from Cerdisa of Italy.

Artesian Waterworks also carries exclusively leading European brands of bath accessories like Solmet and Capannoli from Italy and Pom Dor from Spain.

Other bath-works products are Sundance Spas from the United States, and the Artesian house brand of whirlpools, bathtubs and lavatories.

Artesian Waterworks is at the fifth level of The Podium, 18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center.

SUNDANCE Spa Tub from the U.S. with forest green acrylic glass and red wood panels

About bad breath again

LIVE AND LET LIVE

Tita Dulce

DEAR Blanca: This answers the postscript of your letter answered here last Friday about your bad breath problem.

It's a good thing your mother told you to brush your teeth when you kissed her on her birthday, even if you had just done so.

Here's how to test bad breath, which other readers may also want to know:

Cup your hands, cover your nose and mouth with them, and breathe into them with a long "haaaaa." Sniff after this, and if you smell something not normal, then it smells even worse to those you talk to.

The tongue cleaner mentioned last week will not always be with you because you are supposed to keep it in your bathroom, so here is another solution if you have lunch or dinner with friends where garlic is found in the salad or viand you eat: parsley. It's a breath saver. Eat several sprigs. It's not just a food supplement, it also freshens your breath.

On your next amusing question about *durian*: You stated you grew up in Davao and love to eat *durian*, often found here in Metro Manila markets.

Instead of just eating it on Saturdays and Sundays as you said, you can eat it any day.

Here's a quick solution to removing *durian* smell from your mouth and hands. (I also enjoy the fruit, and one has to hold each seed with our hand).

After eating, hold a part of the outer skin with the sharp nodes, and place the white inner part under a water bottle. Pour water into it, gather what touches the white part in a drinking glass.

Gargle the water several times, and even drink the water to get rid of the smell in your throat. Next, hold the white inner side under the faucet in your sink, and wash your hands with the water that flows into it. I assure you the *durian* smell will disappear from you.

Another suggestion: always have mint-flavored chewing gum in your purse, but don't chew it when you are talking to customers.

E-mail titadulce@netscape.net or send letters to P.O. Box 2353, Makati CPO 1263 Makati City

Ayalaland.com.ph: Your Passport to Living

WONDERING what to do with all your children's idle time? Want to know how to use that old rag that's been in your closet for ages? Looking to turn ordinary, everyday things into something spectacular for your home?

These and other tips are yours - for free - at **ayalaland.com.ph**! It comes with a unique collection of tools, articles and other information to help you find the home of your dreams. Ayalaland.com.ph walks you through every step of the way, from finding a home, to building one, to making it flourish with your family.

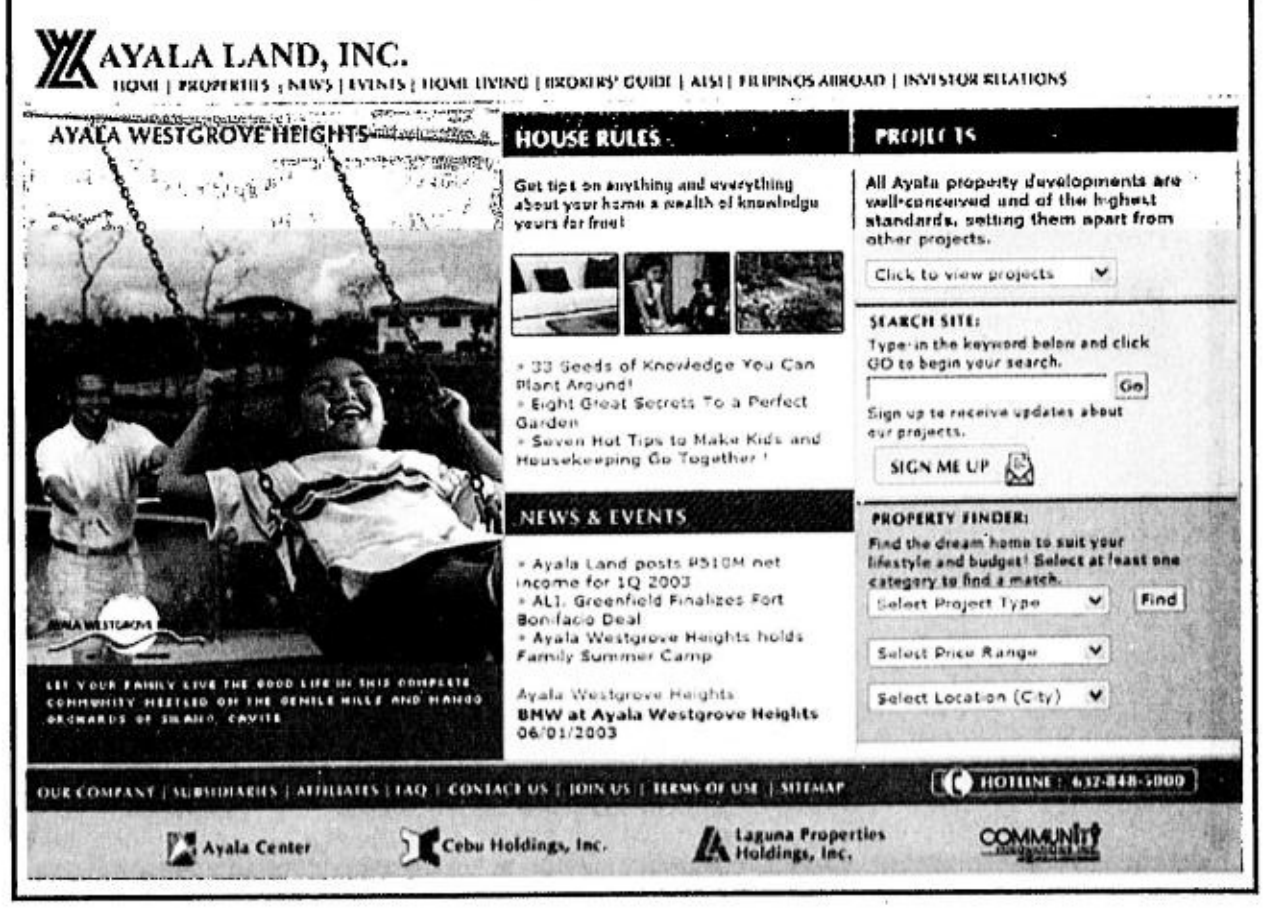
***Find* your Dream Home.** If you know where you want to live and how much you're willing to spend but don't know if there is a property suited just for you, you can check out ayalaland.com.ph for the answer. Among its unique features is the Property Finder which helps you search for the home that is perfect for your lifestyle and budget. Or you can try the Search bar which offers the convenience of navigating the website and eases the delivery of information. You can simply type in the key word and have all the answers looked-up for you.

Filipinos *Abroad*. You don't even have to be in the country to benefit from this site. Ayalaland.com.ph brings the Philippines closer to Filipinos abroad by offering them the convenience of gathering information and quick assistance on how to buy properties in the county. It even has an up-to-date foreign exchange rate as well as a metric conversion table.

Always Something *New* to Know. There are also interesting articles on real estate matters as well as news about the goings-on in the company and other information directly related to Ayala Land's premiere projects. So if you've already bought that property, all the updates you will need are found right in the pages of the Ayala Land website.

The *House* Rules. And when finally you've found the perfect location, the ideal community, the place you want your children to grow up in - it doesn't stop there! The website, through its House Rules section, offers you lifestyle articles with tips on home improvement, family financial matters, and all kinds of useful knowledge – all for free! Learn about fun projects you can do with your children, design your bedroom according to your personality without breaking your budget, and even gather interesting pieces of trivia you can pass around to your friends.

The new Ayala Land website is a one-stop-shop for all those looking to invest in their own home. It opens doors to the different possibilities of living in the Ayala community of your choice. Get into the lifestyle you've always wanted with your own passport to living - www.ayalaland.com.ph.



Dining ware for newlyweds

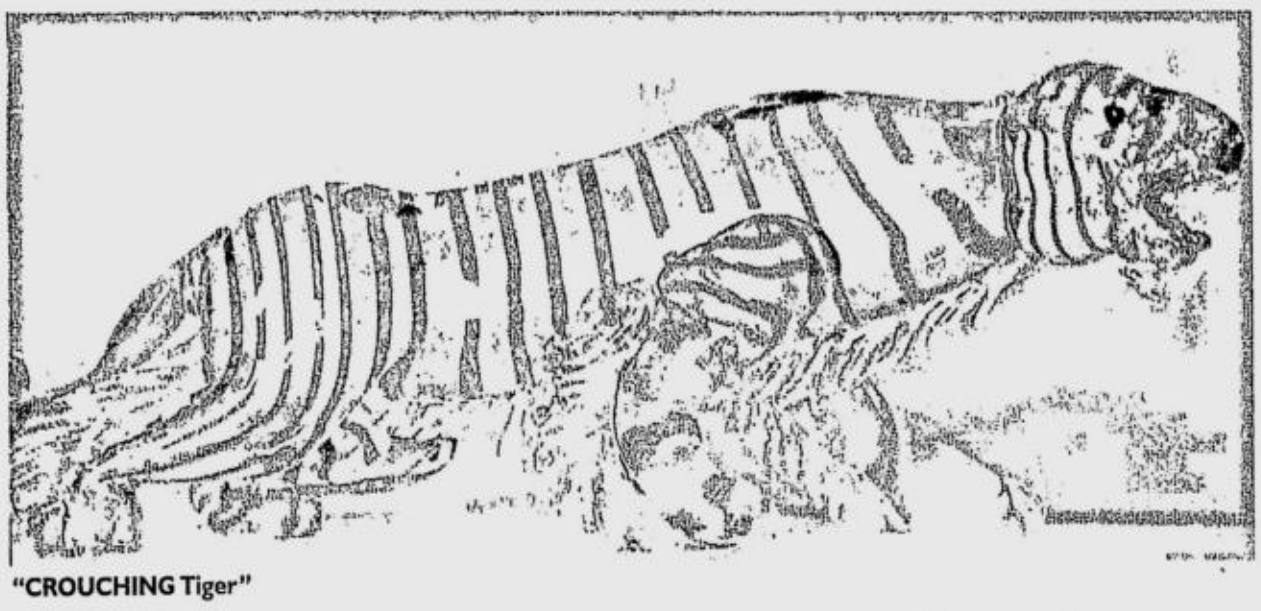
THIS June, Tupperware Philippines is offering newlyweds a line of practical dining ware worthy of great recipes and elegant table settings in their new home.

The Royal Crest and Blue Crystal collection is a complete line of serving bowls and platters, condiment servers, plates, soup bowls, pitchers and drinking glasses that come in a regal combination of gold and royal blue, with the Royal crest pattern and the elegant look of glass. Like all Tupperware products, these dining ware are of long-lasting, virtually unbreakable quality.

The Royal Crest and Blue Crystal collection is one of Tupperware's evolving line of innovative products to help in managing a practical home.

The company's vision of providing the total life continuum—"Live Good, Do Good, Look Good and Feel Good"—has made it one of the biggest direct-selling companies in the world.

Call 888-5521 or 845-4798, or e-mail philmktg@tupperware.com.



"CROUCHING Tiger"

Two iconic names team up for charity

THE INTERNATIONAL Red Cross and Elizabeth Arden are two names famous the world over, though for vastly different reasons.

In the case of the Nobel Prize-winning and internationally recognized humanitarian organization, the Red Cross, it is, of course, because of the gift of hope and compassion that it brings to millions of afflicted people in many parts of the globe, including the Philippines.

Cosmetics giant Elizabeth Arden, on the other hand, forged its brand strength in the glamorous fields of beauty and health care.

Now these two iconic names have forged a partnership.

Elizabeth Arden is set to launch a new line of skincare products called First Defense Advanced Anti-oxidant SPF 15, which coincides with its sponsorship tie-up with the fund-raising activities of the Red Cross.

This year's fund-raising committee, under the chairmanship of Stores Specialists Inc. and Rustan Marketing Corporation president Nedy Tantoco, has lined up several attractive charity gala events.

The first of these is the "Rhapsody in Red" ball on June 24 at the ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental. The event will feature a dinner prepared by the hotel's award-winning chefs, an auction of exquisite Murano sculptures, and a musical presentation featuring Filipino Broadway star Jose Llana, whose most recent stage appearance was in "Flower Drum Song" opposite Lea Salonga.

The 15 Murano pieces to be auctioned include one-of-a-kind figurines, some of them inspired by the Red Cross motif. Johnny Litton will serve as auctioneer.

A catalogue of the pieces for auction will be available, and the sculptures themselves will be on display, at Rustan's Makati until June 23.

Call 895-2109 or 896-9591 locals 104 and 114.

"VENEZIA"

"EGYPTIAN Head"

"PALOMA"

Antique, modern designs of Indonesian furniture showcased

ANTIQUE pieces from different Indonesian provinces are showcased in a furniture and house accessories store called "Kayu" (Bahasa for "wood"), which was opened recently by five enterprising wives of Filipino expatriate professional managers in Jakarta.

The store is located at the ground floor of One Luna Lifestyle Center, Eastwood, Libis, Quezon City, in front of Citibank.

The partners are Gina Perdices Mojica, Annette Lichauco del Rosario, Jeanine Nakpil Lagman, Irene Insigne and Vicky Genato Picornell.

The Kayu collection is a mixture of antique pieces of Indonesia and new designs leaning on modern taste but using old wood from dismantled houses in Java. About 90 percent of the wood in Kayu is teak.

The wives personally handpicked the pieces in Kayu. Among the items that were gobbled up by customers in the first week of the Eastwood store's launch were a wooden solitaire set with precious marbles, a CD cabinet with intricate carving, solid teak console table with pewter masks and artifacts, teak bed with slots and a wooden lone seat, teak rocking chair, Ikat runner on an old *batik* wooden hanger, antique day bed, square teak coffee table, Lombok candle holders, and a pewter seahorse in a frame.

The range of furniture pieces and accessories is varied. What attracts buyers is the items are reasonably priced and unique.

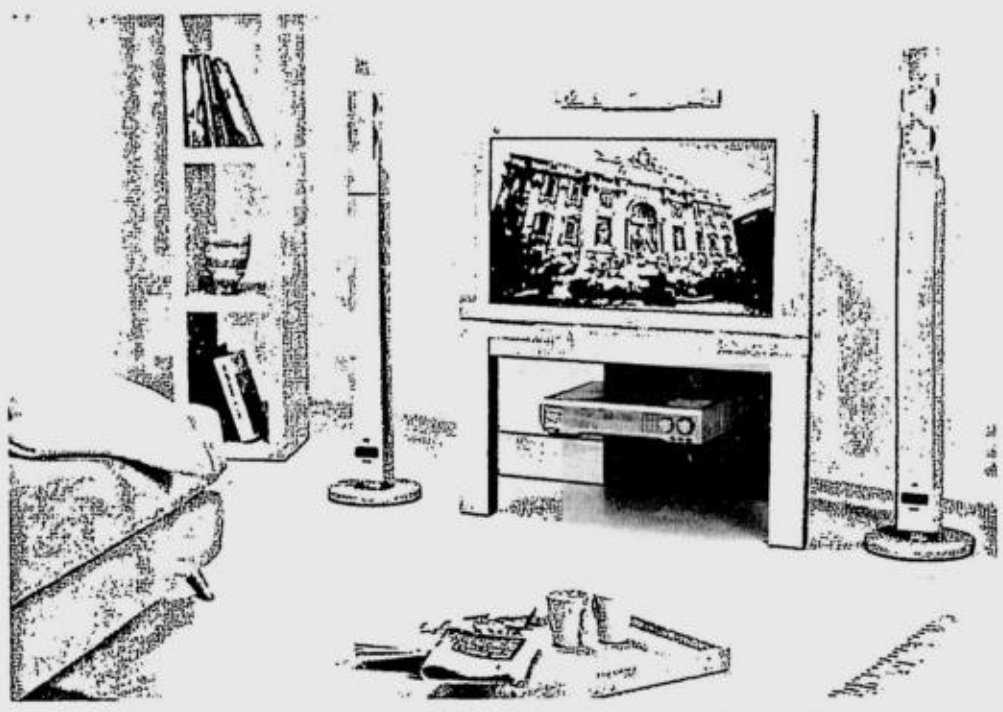
"We've gone all over Indonesia to look for pieces that are unique to the Filipino market," said Lagman, granddaughter of national artist Juan Nakpil. "We buy the items from the source so we are able to skirt broker markups and sell at the lowest possible prices."

Del Rosario, the daughter of businessman Ernesto Lichauco and the late Ninoy Aquino's sister Maur, said the pieces in Kayu are items the five partners would buy for their own homes. It's that personal touch that makes Kayu one of a kind.

Call 633-5351.

ENTRANCE of Kayu in Eastwood leads to a showcase of teak furniture and accessories from different Indonesian provinces.

KAYU partners (seated) Annette del Rosario and Jeanine Lagman; (standing) Gina Mojica, Irene Insigne and Vicky Picornell



PHILIPS' latest Home Theater System offers cinema-style viewing like no other.

Movie-watching at home gets better

PHILIPS Consumer Electronics has unveiled a new home entertainment system combining the Pixel Plus television and the outstanding LX8000 digital video disc home theater system.

The new system offers amazing video quality through the 34PT9420 34" Pixel Plus TV with a revolutionary technology for incredible sharpness, natural detail and depth to images. The Pixel Plus innovation, unique to Philips, improves the image quality of everything onscreen—from video games, DVD movies, to ordinary TV signals.

The Pixel Plus complements other Philips innovations, like the Digital Natural Motion feature, an advanced motion compensation technique that corrects the reproduction of movement in the picture. With Pixel Plus and Digital Natural Motion, smooth movement of moving objects is reproduced on screen.

The Full Active Control feature, which automatically adjusts certain variables to optimize picture performance, also complements Pixel Plus.

The video system is enhanced further by superior sound quality through the LX8000. The DVD player is equipped with the all-in-one Integrated Super Audio CD (SACD) for more natural, ultra-high quality sound. It also has multi-channel sound and Dolby Digital 5.1 and DTS for surround sound. The LX8000 is a six-speaker package, with four two-way satellite loudspeakers and one three-way center speaker. The sixth speaker is a 100-watt RMS powered wOOx subwoofer to generate cinema sonic sound.

INTIMATE APPAREL BRAND HONORS DEALERS

Triumph International (Philippines) Inc. recently honored its top dealers during the Serenata 2003, held recently at Manila Peninsula's Rigodon Ballroom. Recipients of the annual National Top Seller Award-Silver Category are (from left): RSM for Metro Manila Dinah Ramirez, Higena Tafalla, Jonah Lee Badilles, Fatima Lee, Edwarda Francisco, Charmin Panganiban, Remelita Ravelo, RSM for Vis/Min Del Rivera, Romana Valoria, Yolita Pang, Elizabeth Yap, Miriam Raunones, Catherine Alcazar, Rosita de la Peña and RSM for Luzon/Metro Manila Janice Lozano.

Grocery shopping has never been this rewarding!

Robinsons Supermarket

Get FREE snacks when you use your international credit card from HSBC at any Robinsons Supermarket.

Pica-pica has always been a simple but very rewarding treat for Pinoys. That's why the world's local bank now gives you **6 FritoLay snacks plus six cans of 7-Up Frootaz FREE.** Just spend at least P3,000 at any Robinsons Supermarket outlet using your international credit card from HSBC.

So now, you can enjoy real value on your everyday grocery expenses --- and it's only from the world's local bank.

Hurry! This exclusive offer to HSBC credit cardholders is **until 17 August 2003** only. For inquiries, please call 878-7878 or 1-800-1-888-8555. You may also visit www.hsbc.com.ph.

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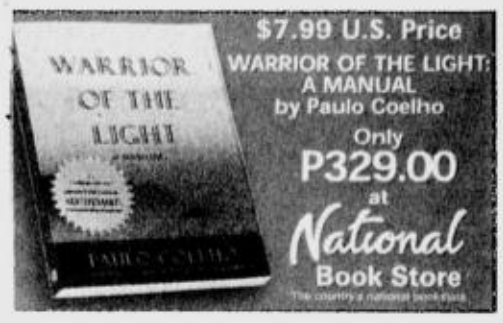
LIFESTYLE



Sexy lace-ups and a frugal shopper's little black book

Stay away from wide straps that look chunky when wound around your ankles

I FIND sandals with ankle straps really sexy, but I think they make my not-so-slender ankles and legs look thicker than they actually are. Whenever I go shoe shopping, I get really discouraged and end up not buying that particular style. Should I just give up my search for the perfect pair of lace-ups?

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

Lace-ups, ankle straps or gladiator style sandals can look really sexy, so don't give up your search for a pair that suits you. You are bound to find something that will flatter your not-so-dainty ankles and less-than-willowy legs.

Just veer away from flat sandals with laces that can make your legs look shorter, your feet bigger and your ankles thicker. Pick a pair with heels to create the illusion of length. Even an inch can make a big difference. Keep in mind that the higher the heel, the longer and possibly slimmer your leg will appear.

It's also a good idea to stay away from wide straps that look chunky when wound around your ankles. Remember that your whole leg will look thicker if the laces are bunched up on your ankle. Thin, spaghetti-like laces that extend up your calves can make your legs look more slender. Plus, your legs will look much sexier if you expose the slimmest part by starting your laces right above the ankle bone.

Color is also an important consideration. A nude pair that doesn't create too much contrast and therefore elongates, is your safest choice. If all else fails, go ahead and choose sandals in this dependable, easy-to-match, albeit not-so-exciting hue. But then again, if you have a more adventurous sense of style, go wild with a combination of different colors. You might as well make a fashion statement!

Check out stores like CMG, Janylin and U at Rustan's for affordable yet stylish lace-ups. And if you absolutely cannot find a pair in any of the retail stores, don't lose heart. You can still have them custom-made.

Shoe designers like Lila Almario or Emi Jorge of Solea might be able to design something that will look good on you and that will satisfy your specifications. It shouldn't cost much more than a store-bought pair, and yet you end up getting exactly what you've been looking for.

You may set an appointment with Ms Jorge by calling 633-8004. Or try calling Ms Almario at 898-1838 or 724-4736. You can also check out the Lila Almario boutique at the Power Plant mall.

THIN, spaghetti -like laces that extend up to your calves can make your legs look more slender.

I found your article on shopping tips very informative and accurate. I am a serious shopper myself and have searched every nook and cranny in Illinois for the best places to go. Discounts of 10-30 percent don't move me; 50 will get me to pause; 70-90 gives me a lasting rush! I'd be miserable if I were forced to pay full price for clothing!

That is why I rarely go to the outlets (and you've mentioned this) because the items are from the previous year and the prices are only 30-50 percent off. It's always best to go to the regular stores when they go on clearance (rock-bottom prices up to 80-percent off!) or hit the big department store outlets like Off 5th and Nordstrom Rack when they go on tag sale.

In Illinois, it's fun to go to Filene's Basement in downtown Chicago and Loehmann's in Oakbrook or Morton Grove. Both stores are closeout retailers of designer items.

Of course, you can't miss Neiman when they have the last call sale (designer labels with Ann Taylor price tags!). Barney's on E. Oak Street is also great when they go on sale. The Lighthouse Premium Outlet in Michigan City, Indiana (an hour from Chicago), is worth going to for Burberry and Coach. Mark Shale's outlet in Elston is awesome if you chance upon their blowout sales while some TJ Maxx and Marshal's purchases can make you glow!

There you go... a frugal shopper's little black book!

P.S. Nothing can beat *tiangge* (flea markets) and trade fairs in the Philippines—the bargain mecca for export overruns and our very own original stuff!

Here are some additional shopping tips and haunts that a wise and thrifty fellow shopaholic generously shared with us. Those of you who are headed out to the Windy City will surely appreciate all this information.

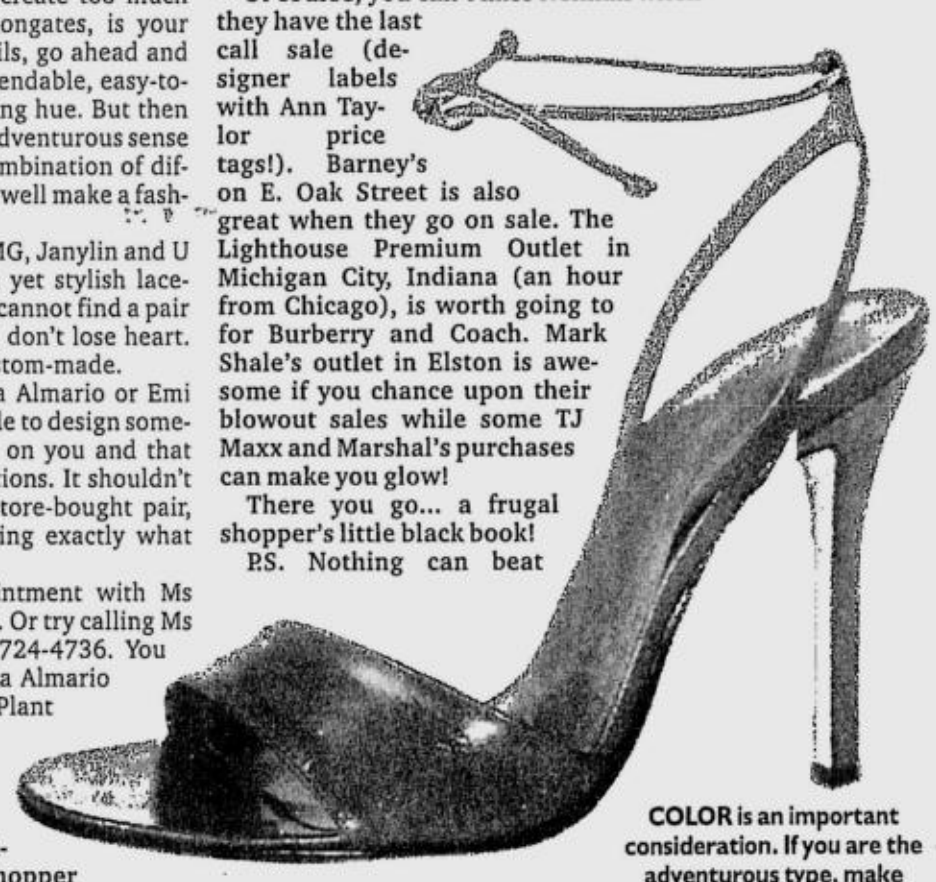
And although it is ideal to wait for tag and clearance sales that offer merchandise at rock-bottom prices, this is not always possible when you are on a trip. Often times, you just can't chance upon major "blowout" sales and the like. So, it is still a good idea to check out outlet and discount stores for bargain finds.

In case you are headed to other parts of America, bear in mind that most of the stores mentioned above have chains all over the US. For instance, the Lighthouse Premium Outlet is operated by the same group as Woodbury Commons in New York and Premium Outlets in Orlando. Meanwhile, stores like Barney's, Neiman Marcus, Off 5th, Nordstrom Rack, Loehmann's, Filene's, TJ Maxx and Marshal's are everywhere, possibly in most cities and every state. Just ask for the location of these stores in the particular area or areas you are visiting.

Meanwhile, another experienced shopaholic suggests that you visit the following sites for current listing of designer sales in Manhattan: www.nysale.com or www.newyorkmetro.com. And for high-end cosmetic bargains, she recommends that you check out the Cosmetic Market on 39th Street, between Madison and Fifth (right by Lord and Taylor on Fifth Avenue).

Happy shopping to all you frugal fashionistas!

E-mail the author at apsadvice@hotmail.com



COLOR is an important consideration. If you are the adventurous type, make a fashion statement.

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Real People. True Stories.

"Now great skin runs in the family – thanks to Imedeen!"

Cynthia Elazegui Sanchez,
41, HR Manager
Cristy Elazegui Puzon,
40, Airline Ticketing Supervisor

Like all sisters, they share secrets. Like the beauty secret that keeps them looking so young for their age.

"I learned of Imedeen thru my colleague," Cristy confides. "I immediately convinced Cynthia to try it." Pretty soon, both sisters were hooked, and for good reason. "I thought my sunspots and blemishes were there for good – but now they're completely gone," Cynthia shares. "My skin really improved. Feeling ko parang skin ng baby," declares Cristy. That's because only Imedeen helps nourish and strengthen the inner layer of the skin, resulting in more youthful, brighter and even skin tone.

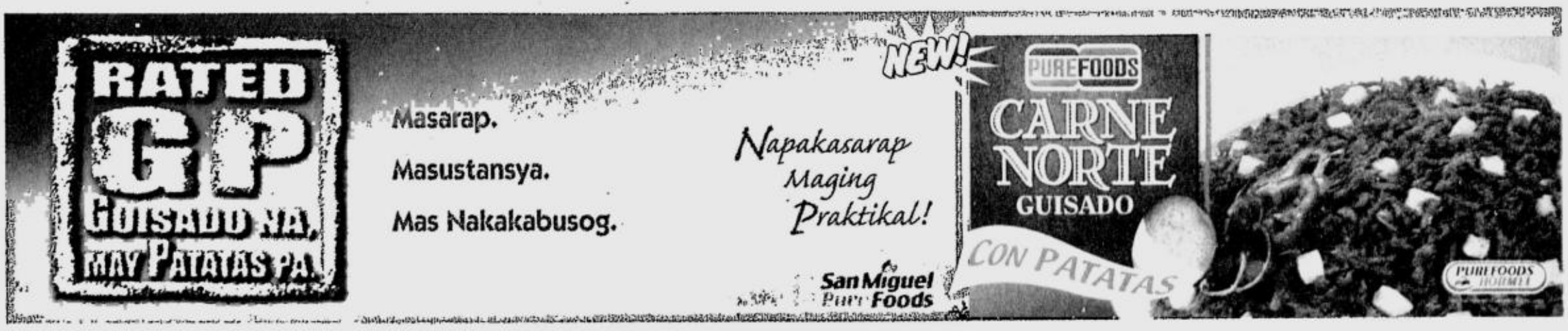
"We're each other's best friends," Cynthia exclaims. 'But we both agree, ang best friend ng skin namin is Imedeen!"

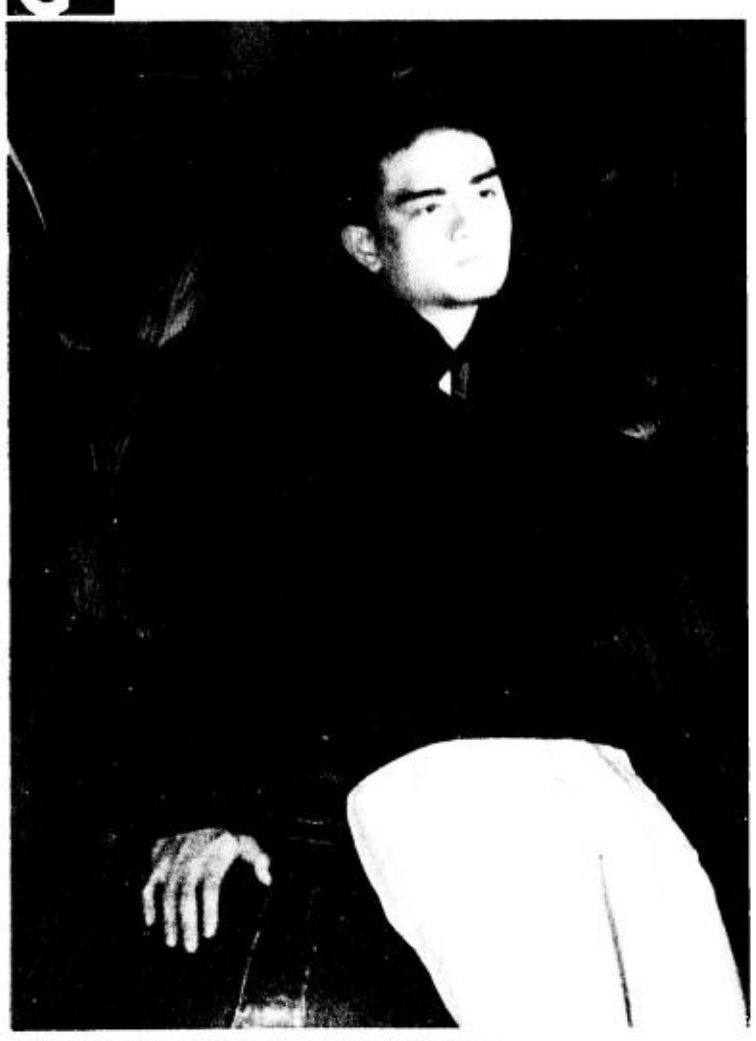
Imedeen. The Skin Care Tablet.

Ultrasound images of the skin structure: denser structure implies better support and ability to hold moisture

Clinically Proven

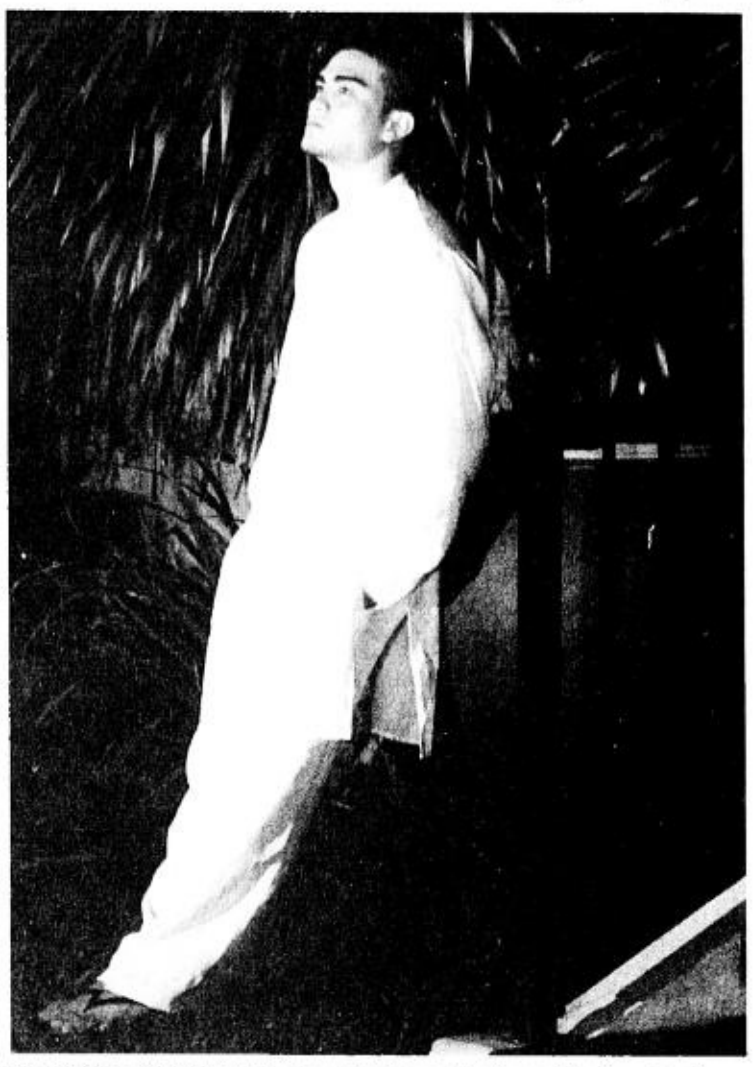
The Skin Care Tablet





FREEDOM FRIDAY. Rayne goes straight from the office to "gimmick" night in a black, long-sleeved cotton shirt (P11,280) and striped seersucker pants (P6,880).

LAID-BACK LOOK. Philip slips into a "natural" linen suit (P33,800) and brown ribbed cotton tee (P4,780).



WHITE KNIGHT. Rayne looks chivalrous chic in a white linen tunic (P8,180) and white drawstring pants (P9,780).

The BOSS goes fancy-free

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Chito Vecina

Hugo Boss breaks away from tradition by releasing loose voile shirts and seersucker pants in its latest collection

FANS of high-end German brand Hugo Boss are in for a big surprise. After years of churning out impeccable but traditional suits, shirts and ties, Hugo Boss loosens up with its latest summer collection consisting of floral-printed voile shirts, striped seersucker pants and ribbed cotton tees.

"The latest collection is atypical of what people's perceptions are of Hugo Boss," says Joseph Cu Unjieng, brand manager of Igedo Fashions Inc., exclusive distributor of Hugo Boss in the Philippines. "We still carry suits, ties, dress shirts and pants, but now we have more [to offer]."

In the wake of 9/11, says Cu Unjieng, major designers toned down their collections to reflect the times. Hugo Boss wasn't impervious to these developments. Instead of toning down the look, however, the company's in-house designers decided to lighten up with never-before-seen pieces.

"The transition began last summer," he adds, "when linen suits and shirts with looser silhouettes made their debut."

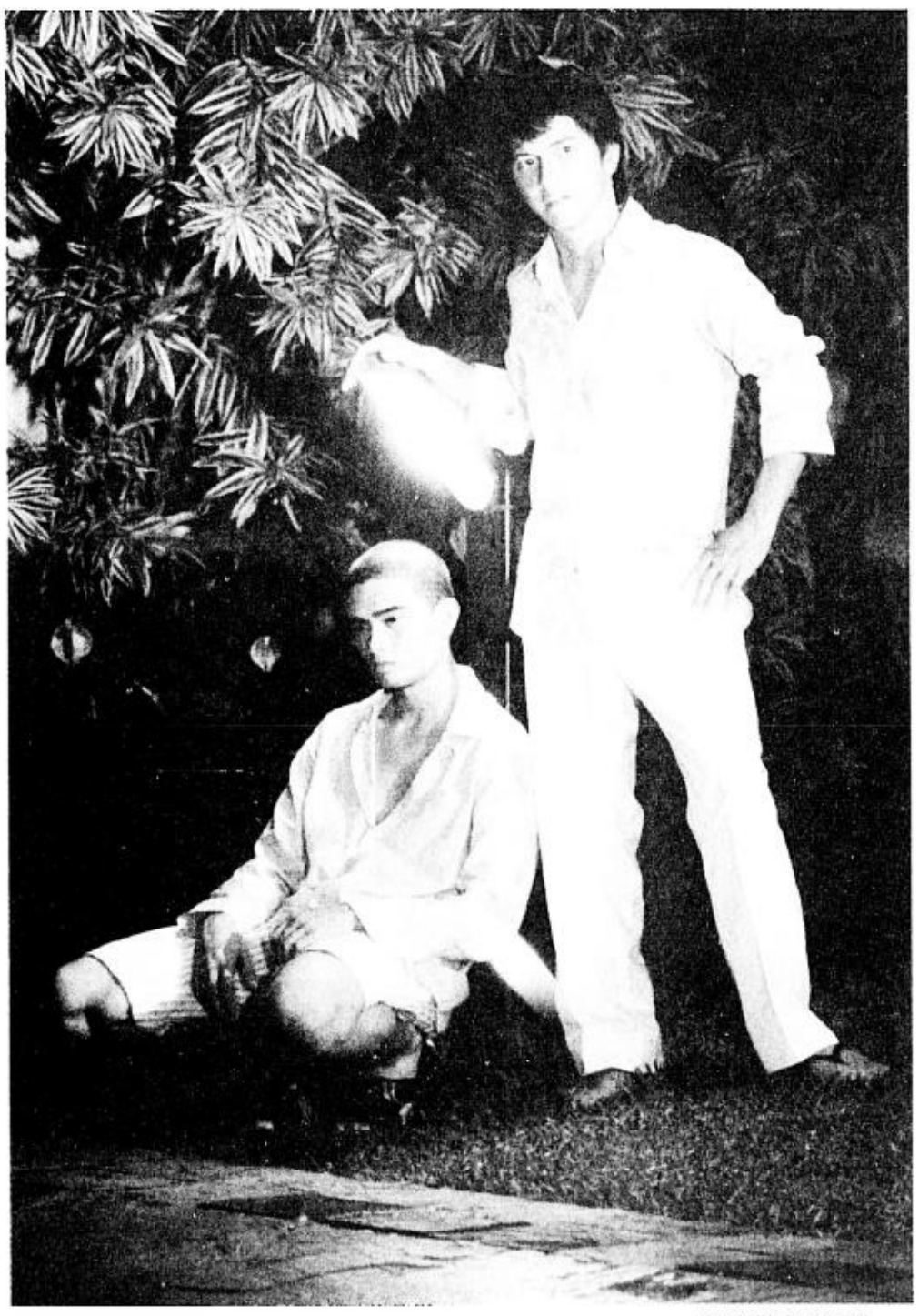
What a difference a year makes. This time Hugo Boss is riding on the wave of its market's optimism by launching a number of ensembles that are light on the eye and easy on the body.

Such shades as white, sky blue and "natural"—beige or taupe to the uninitiated—dominate the brand's summer collection. Majority of the pieces are made of voile, a light and gauzy cotton material preferred by many Western designers this season.

Of course, black will always be a staple in everybody's wardrobe, but even Hugo Boss' most loyal patrons want to be seen in other shades.

"Despite all the uncertainties we face today, people want to look and feel optimistic by wearing lighter shades," says Cu Unjieng.

WATCHFUL GAZE. Rayne goes hip and sporty in a hooded zip-front sweatshirt (P7,980), striped tee (P5,180) and striped seersucker pants (P6,880).



FLOWER POWER. Rayne Ranin and Philip Cruz pair their floral-printed light-blue shirts (P8,380 each) with striped cotton shorts (P7,280) and white cotton trousers (P10,780), respectively. Philip's leather thong sandals (P10,080) and Rayne's sling back sandals (P11,880) are also from Hugo Boss.

Floral flight

Floral prints, which used to be limited to Hugo Boss' ties, have now found their way in a number of shirts. White pants with stripes and denim details made of seersucker have now become summer staples that were once associated with arguably more hip brands aimed at the young.

Unlike certain high-end brands, Hugo Boss appeals to a broader segment of the market, says Cu Unjieng. Except for certain items grouped under the brand's Orange Label, one doesn't have to be too young or too fit to give justice to a Hugo Boss outfit.

"That's one good thing about Hugo Boss," says Cu Unjieng. "You don't have to be buffed to be able to carry it. The brand is known not for setting trends, but for adopting and distilling trends to cater to a wider audience and body type."

Light is also synonymous to comfort. Aside from Hugo Boss' airy voile tops and striped bottoms, its white tunic with matching drawstring pants is ideal for the country's humid weather—come rain or shine.

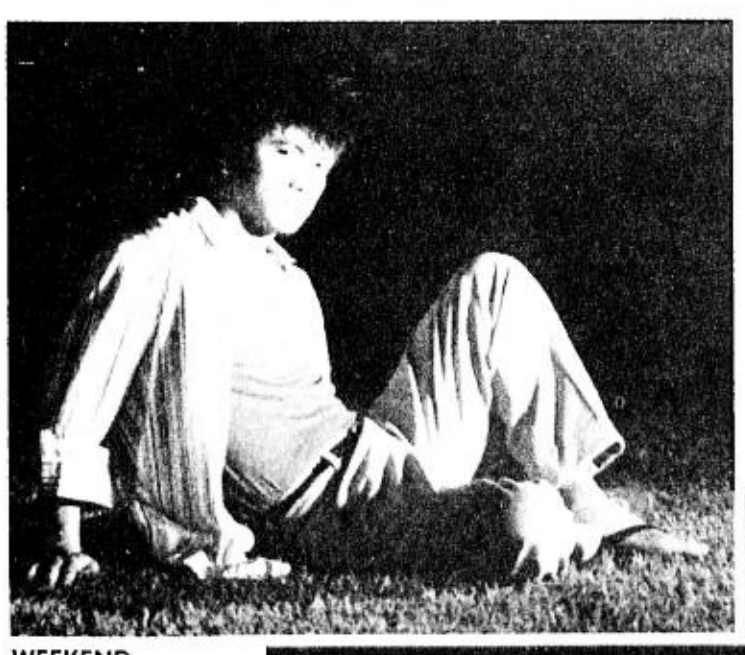
"Every piece in our summer collection is current," assures Cu Unjieng. "We may be experiencing some rains every now and then, but summer has just begun in the US and Europe."

It seems everything about Hugo Boss' latest collection is light except for its price. A linen suit, for instance, can set a fashionista back by P33,800. A pair of drawstring linen shorts costs P7,380, while a pair of white seersucker pants costs P6,880.

"Every item is worth its price, considering the material and workmanship that went into it," says Cu Unjieng. Not to mention the priceless sense of optimism each article of clothing provides its wearer.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

MOONLIGHTING. Philip basks in the evening glow in a light gray hooded pullover sweatshirt (P8,380) and square-cut dark-brown swimming trunks (P4,180).

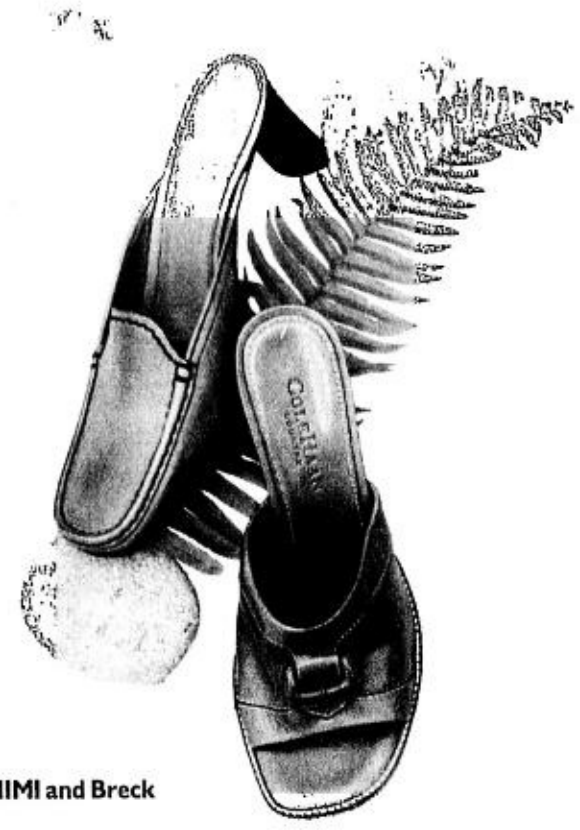


WEEKEND WARRIOR. Philip sets the mood in a multi-striped shirt (P8,380) over a rust ribbed cotton tee and a pair of "natural" flat front cotton twill pants (P7,980).

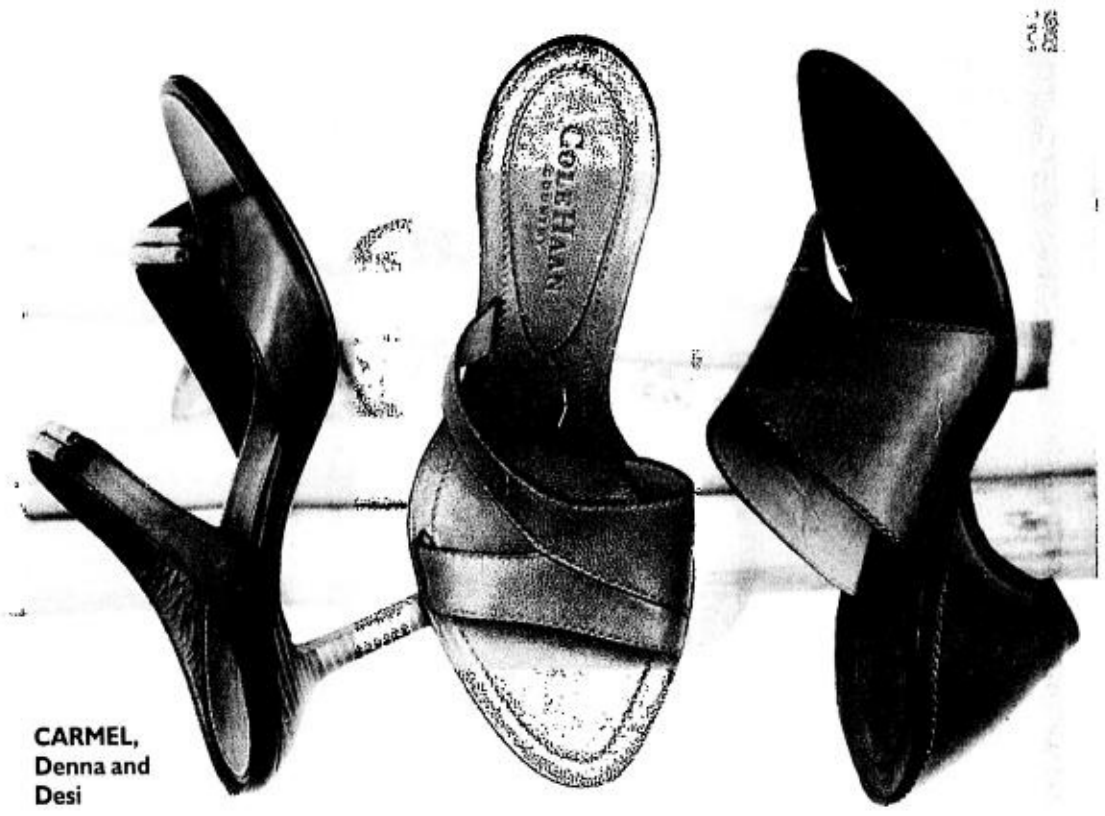
CLOTHES: HUGO BOSS
STYLING: MICHAEL SALIENTES
HAIR AND GROOMING: MELVIN MOJICA
MODELS: RAYNE RANIN, STUNNER; AND PHILIP CRUZ
VENUE: REYNO RESIDENCE, MAKATI
SPECIAL THANKS TO PATRICK REYNO

SPLENDOR IN THE GRASS. Rayne cools off in black bikini trunks (P4,180) and a black knit top (P8,380).

CHARLOTTE, Caley and Celeste



MIMI and Breck



CARMEL, Denna and Desi

Earthy urban hues

THE CURRENT season for footwear dictates subdued colors for the most part.

Perhaps as a contrast to the showy color-wheel palette, shoes come in the paler colors of earth and dark, urban hues. Expect to see a lot of filtered naturals: clay, pewter, almond, oatmeal-white shot through with flecks of solid, or the plummy, creamy tones of coffee, curry, chestnut, peat and deep and rich browns. Splashes of brights do round out this color story, mostly in pumpkin, fire orange, peacock blue, a true red, magenta and rich, bright gold.

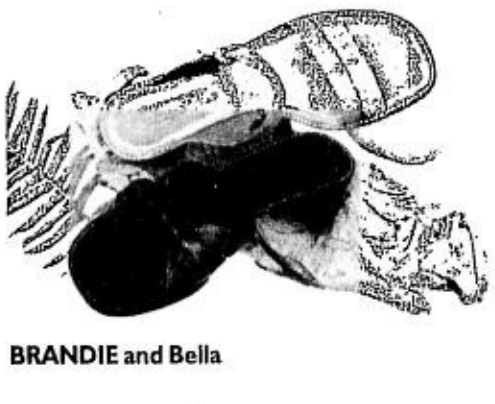
The new Cole Haan collection captures the color mood of the moment with its range of excellently crafted ladies and men's footwear in languorous shades of tan, camel, amber, wheat, stone and desert brown, and with its share of brights in fire red and silver blue.

Cole Haan's earthy-colored pumps, stilettos, slingbacks, moccasins and mules provide the perfect complement to bright get-ups, with their plush calfskin leather and suede and interesting details.

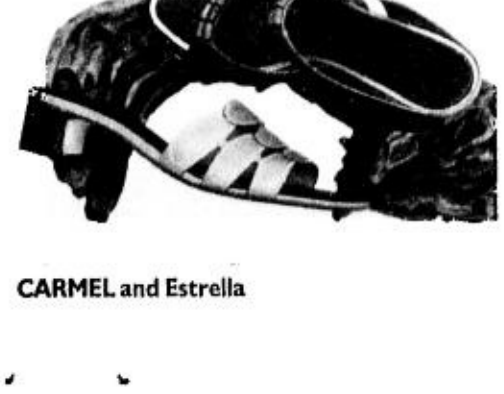
Backed by decades of artisan craftsmanship (each pair is handcrafted), Cole Haan is one of those rare luxury brands which combine heritage and modern style.

Cole Haan is available at its showroom in Rockwell Power Plant Mall as well as in Rustan's at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Makati, Harrison Plaza and Alabang Town Center.

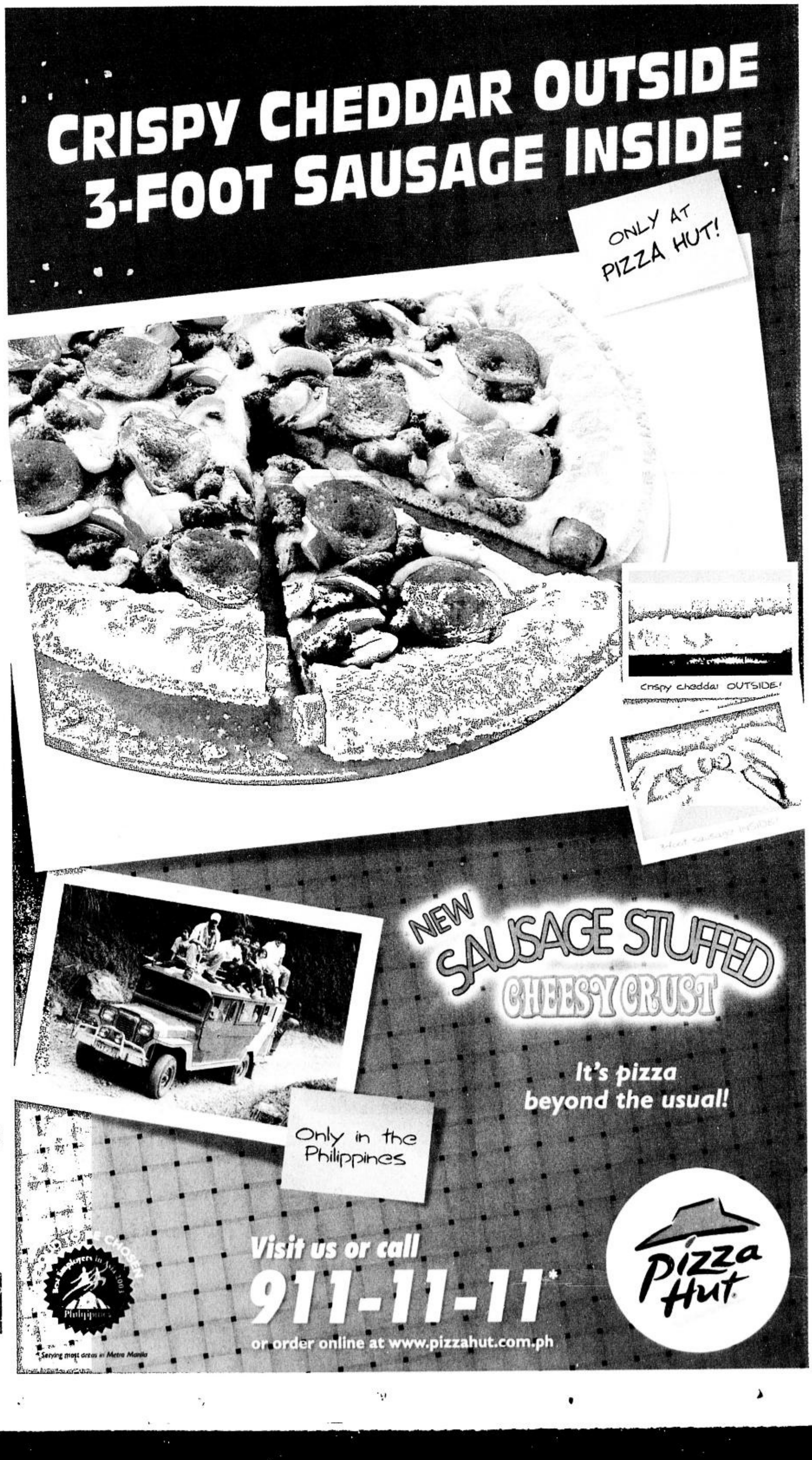
NICKOLA and Winona



BRANDIE and Bella



CARMEL and Estrella



Going under Cesar Montano

In a new campaign for Hanford, the handsome actor and hotshot fotog Jun de Leon show the natural side of skin

GOOD chemistry between topnotch photographer Jun de Leon and good-looking model-actor Cesar Montano should lend an extra spice to Hanford underfashion line's newest advertising campaign dubbed "As you wear."

There is a ceaseless whirl of activity on the set of the shoot at the Trader's Hotel, Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

Montano and De Leon huddle in preparation for their next photo set-up. Amid the clutter of lenses and film, makeup, bags, and the presence of executives of Mansfield International Inc. and the creative team of Brand Asia, Ltd., the mood is light and warm.

Jun de Leon moves about the set in casual caprice. No interviews for this seemingly "private" person.

Of his long-running professional relationship with Jun, Cesar says admiringly: "*Magaling talaga siya*. We've been working together for over a decade. It's always been an honor to work with him. We have chemistry, that's why we work very well."

The actor, star of such critically acclaimed hit movies as "Rizal" and "Bagong Buwan" plus a slew of action films, notes that it was De Leon who had photographed him for most of his movie posters, magazine covers and print ads when he was just starting out in entertainment.

"We wanted to bring out the best of Cesar," says Brand Asia Ltd.'s president Chic Satuito about the new campaign.

Brand Asia has tried to explore new ideas with Mansfield International's marketing executives. The company and its product lines have been in existence since the 1950s, and have been utilizing top-of-the-line, cutting-edge technology. But the concern has been how to make the market look at the product brands with renewed interest.

Lovelle Sy, Mansfield International Inc.'s marketing manager, says she is satisfied with the pictorial.

PHOTO icon Jun de Leon gets ready to shoot celebrity model Cesar Montano for Hanford's latest advertising campaign.

So involved

"What's nice with Jun is that he's so involved even in the pre-production stage of the new campaign for Hanford—he gives his creative inputs for every layout," she says. "We are hoping that the new campaign would bring about positive growth in our sales and enhance the image of Hanford."

Hanford brand officer Gladys Cruz says she is confident that the "As you wear" campaign will create a buzz.

The "As you wear" campaign highlights the basics—of taking it easy, being cool and comfortable, wherever and whoever one may be.

As Satuito says, "We wanted to project the idea that when you wear a Hanford, you can be the way you are. You don't have to change your lifestyle... It goes with you, whatever you do. No pretensions. It moves the way you move. Whoever you are, whatever you're doing."

Cesar Montano, as image model, can cater to the broad ageless market.

Moreover, Cesar, as Brand Asia's creative director says, is a "complete" man—an artist, a regular guy who jokes around, and an actor who does his best enough to land a coveted role in a Hollywood movie like "The Great Raid" (based on the book "Ghost Soldiers" by Hampton Sides).

"Cesar very well embodies the world-class quality which the firm has become noted for."

Offscreen, Cesar Montano truly fits Hanford's "As you wear" marketing pitch—an individual who has come to terms with himself and relishes simple yet challenging roles—including being a father.

During the pictorial, he and manager Norma Japitana excitedly talk about the winsome charm of his young daughter, Angelina Isabel, whose photo Cesar brings with, along with that of his other pretty daughter by a previous relationship.

Hanford's "As you wear" ad campaign depicts Montano—whether he is preparing for a big scene, at work in a directorial job, pursuing his artistic passion as painter, or taking a breather—in his natural milieu, but in ways he has never been seen before.

MONTANO gamely helps in camouflaging his face in the photo setup.

CREATIVE collaboration in motion. Montano checks out the shots of master photographer Jun de Leon.

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"The challenge here is to optimize the use of available resources by being more innovative, resourceful and efficient."

& A at Page H3

SPECIAL REPORT

WHAT'S INSIDE:

P65 Billion Irrigation Projects ... **Page H4**
NIA partners with farmers, LGUs ... **Page H5**
Mindanao the new frontier ... **Page H7**

NIA eyes 28% growth thru cost-effective projects

Taking off from a dramatic turnaround last year, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) aims to set this year new benchmarks in cost-effective irrigation.

Despite a total outlay of only P6.93 billion for the current year, which is 34.5 percent lower than the P10.57 billion allocation last year, NIA expects to irrigate 35,924 hectares of new farmlands, representing a 28% increase over last year's record of 28,148 hectares. NIA also expects to rehabilitate existing irrigation structures covering 174,950 hectares. These newly irrigated and rehabilitated farmlands will benefit some 210,874 farm families nationwide.

National Government allocation for the current year is actually P5.76 billion, with 80% or P4.6 billion intended for regular foreign-assisted and locally funded projects while the remaining 20 percent or P1.17 billion is allocated for the NIA component under the Agrarian Reform Program. On top of these amounts, a carry-over fund from

NIA targets /H2

PROJECT BRIEFING
Department of Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo, Jr. and National Irrigation Administration Administrator Jesus Emmanuel M. Paras (2nd and 3rd from left) brief President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on the P4.3 billion Irrigation Component of the Pampanga Delta Development Project during the President's recent visit at the site of the project's Cong Dadong Dam in Pampanga. Congressman Oscar Rodriguez, Arayat Mayor Benigno Espino and Presidential Adviser Angelito Sarmiento look on.

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

"With greater demand for food, the challenge that you will face in the coming years is enormous."

Congratulations to the men and women of the ***National Irrigation Administration*** *on the agency's 40th Year of dedicated service to the nation.*

Like my father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, who signed Republic Act 3601 creating the NIA on June 22, 1963, I firmly believe that irrigation is a prime mover of agricultural and rural development, which in turn, is a fundamental requisite for economic growth.

On this most important occasion, I commend the officials and employees of NIA for effectively implementing various irrigation projects, maintaining and operating irrigation systems nationwide, organizing farmers into irrigators' associations and providing them with training that will optimize the benefits that irrigation brings.

With greater economic activities and demand for food, the challenge that you will face in the coming years is enormous. I am confident that your strong commitment will enable you to deliver sterling performance as you did for the past two years.

Mabuhay!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

"Despite intervening factors, NIA effectively implemented government's irrigation program."

Irrigation is a major prime mover of agricultural and countryside development, increasing cropping intensity, and farm productivity and incomes. Thus, it is key in attaining progress and prosperity in the rural areas, which dovetails with our goal of creating renewed vigor and wealth in the countryside, or aptly ***"Panibagong Sigla at Yaman sa Kanayunan."***

We commend the men and women of the National Irrigation Administration for reaching another milestone in performance of its mandate. For the past 40 years NIA–in cooperation with farmers, Filipino and foreign institutions and LGUs–has successfully set up, maintained and operated various irrigation facilities and systems, as well as in organizing and training irrigators' associations.

To date, some 1.39 million hectares of farmlands have irrigation facilities, of which 50% is serviced by 191 national systems, 38% by 6,600 communal systems, and 12% by pumps. More is yet to be done, however, as there are still 1.74 million hectares yet to be irrigated.

Despite limited funds and other intervening factors, NIA has continuously and effectively implemented government's irrigation program. In 2001 and 2002, the agency rehabilitated more than twice the area during the 1990s. And for the first time in its history, new irrigated areas and those with rehabilitated systems reached a record high of 297,000 hectares in 2002.

This remarkable performance–coupled with farmers' hard work and perseverance, good weather, use of certified and hybrid seeds, and other technical, credit and infrastructure support–has enable us to produce a record harvest of 13.27 million metric tons of palay, the highest in the country's history. This year, our palay production target is at least 14.2 million MT, and next year, achieve these by irrigating more areas, and massive use of certified and hybrid seeds, among other farm inputs and interventions.

I therefore enjoin the men and women of NIA to remain committed in providing professional and prompt service to our various clientele, most especially farmers, and thus further solidify your distinction as effective and efficient catalysts of agricultural and countryside development. Congratulations and more power

Mabuhay ang NIA!

LUIS P. LORENZO, JR.
Secretary

'Balikatan' empowers local government units

Cooperation is the key! More and more communities in the countryside are reaping the benefits of the cooperative scheme called Balikatan Sagip Patubig Program (BSPP) adopted by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) with the concerned local government units (LGUs), and farm-based irrigators' associations (IAs) for the irrigation of large tracts of farmlands.

At the end of 2002, the construction of 79 communal irrigation projects (CIPs) and rehabilitation of 427 existing communal irrigation systems (CISs) have been completed through BSPP. These projects generated 1,525 hectares of new areas and rehabilitated 12,480 hectares, with a corresponding increase in farm yields which benefited 33,567 farmers. The 506 communal projects implemented from 2000 to 2002 cost P805.5 million to which participating LGUs contributed some 18.5 percent of the cost.

This followed the successful program implementation last year when NIA managed to irrigate 21,000 hectares of farmlands, double the average yearly generation in the 1990s and the 1980s.

With these encouraging results, NIA Adminsitrator Jesus Emmanuel M. Paras said the agency is determined to pursue the program more aggressively in line with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's pitch for agricultural development in the countryside.

"What is special about BSPP is that it

Balikatan /H2

AFTER P121-M LOSS IN 2000

NIA income exceeds P60-M mark two years in a row

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) posted two successive years of positive operating results as it turned in net incomes of P63M for 2001 and P61 million for 2002.

The 2001 performance was singularly significant considering that in the year previous, in 2000, NIA incurred a P121M loss, the second biggest in the last 12 years.

Except for three years (1991, 1997 and 1999), NIA had incurred annual losses ranging from P6 million to P156 million in 1992.

Given the sorry state of NIA's finances when he took over, the strengthening of its financial position became a primary concern of NIA Administrator Jesus Emmanuel M. Paras. Instituting a combination of various cost-cutting measures and revenue-enhancing efforts such as speeding up the collection of irrigation service fees (ISF), management was able to substantially improve the agency's financial condition.

From just P1.15 billion in 2000, NIA's total revenues generated in 2001 rose by 14 percent, reaching P1.31 billion. In 2002, total revenue hit an all-time high of P1.43 billion. A substantial portion of the revenue came from the ISF, accounting for about 35 percent of total. Recognizing the impact of the service fees on total revenues, management, intensified the ISF collection in 2001. In that year, ISF collection reached P455.3 million, up by 16 percent from just P393.2 million in 2000. This rose to P626.2 million in 2002 the highest recorded ISF collection in NIA's 40 years of existence. ISF collection efficiency was placed at an average of 53 percent in 2001 and 2002, up from between 35 and 46 percent in the previous years.

The substantial increase in revenue collection, while keeping expenditures at reasonable levels, resulted in the rise of net operating income from the negative P121 million.

By the end of last year, management almost completely solved the problems with accounts payables and unpaid salaries, and even provided NIA personnel additional, unexpected employee benefits. For many, the aggregate financial benefits they received was the highest that the agency has ever provided in its history.

Administrator Paras said giving employees the best benefits that the agency can financially and legally provide enhances their production and efficiency. This, he said, was proven by the remarkable performance of the agency in 2001. "We did not only bring vitality to NIA's ailing financial condition, we also delivered record hectarage of irrigated areas and greater services to our farmers", Paras added.

NIA honors outstanding workers, irrigators

Seventy-four (74) officials and employees of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and 35 Irrigators Associations (IA's) will be given awards in recognition of their remarkable performance, exemplary leadership and skillful management that resulted in substantial contributions to the promotion of the welfare of the farmers, efficient project implementation and sustainable corporate growth.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Department of Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo, Jr. and Administrator Jesus Emmanuel Paras will confer the

NIA Honors /H6

2002 a banner year for NIA with P13.26 million MT bumper crop

Food security is one of the top priority concerns of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration. This concern is reflected in many related measures that bolster agricultural production and improve productivity in the countryside.

The onset of the El Nino, the prolonged drought last year, and with barely half of the country's irrigable areas covered by the existing irrigation systems, heightened anxieties over the security of food supply.

Against the odds and perhaps a credit to the government's determined effort to boost production, the year 2002 was a milestone year for Philippine agriculture and, not surprisingly, a banner year for the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

For the first time in the country's history, palay production topped all records, as it posted a record harvest of 13.27 million metric tons, ensuring much higher buffer stocks for the country's rice requirements.

Partly explaining this record output is NIA's record-setting achievements, when for the first time in NIA's history, the combined area of new farmlands opened for irrigation and farmlands within existing irrigation systems that were "rehabilitated" reached a record high of 297,800 hectares in 2002. The 28,148-hectare newly irrigated farmland is 33 percent higher than what NIA delivered in 2001 and almost double the average yearly area that the agency used to generate during the period 1990-2000. On the other hand, the 269,665-hectare "rehabilitated" riceland in existing irrigation systems is 81 percent higher than what NIA rehabilitated in 2001 and three times the area that NIA used to rehabilitate in the 1990s.

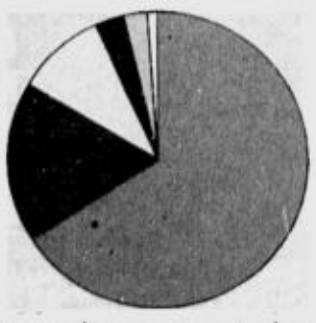
These newly irrigated and "rehabilitated" farmlands benefit at least 368,700 farm families and deliver a yearly incremental increase in palay production of at least 525,200 metric tons.

Of the 28,148 hectares of new farmlands, 4,601 hectares were delivered by Pampanga Delta Development Project; 2,128 hectares, by Casecnan Multi-Purpose Irrigation Project; 1,562 hectares by Lower Agusan Development Project; and 1,134 hectares, by Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation Project. The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program-Irrigation Component produced 7,439 hectares while the El Nino Program, 4,221 hect

2002 A Banner year Page H2

The National Irrigation Administration at 40

Financial



- P10 billion capitalization
- P37.7 billion in assets
- P1.43 billion total revenue
- P5.6 billion paid-in capital
- P1.8 billion Corporate Operating Budget
- P0.61 billion net operating income

Organization

- 10,800 employees nationwide
- 15 regional irrigation offices
- 67 provincial irrigation offices
- 108 irrigation systems offices
- 16 project management offices

Irrigation System / Service

191 national irrigation systems
- 690,000-hectare service area
- 1,000,000 ha irrigated annually
- 4.0 million tons paddy production
- 520,000 farmer-beneficiaries

6,700 communal irrigation systems
- 520,000-hectare service area
- 700,000 ha. Irrigated annually
- 2.8 million tons paddy production
- 610,000 farmer-beneficiaries

Projects

16 major projects worth P60 billion and hundreds of small continuing projects, e.g., rehabilitation.

About P6.0 billion annual budget for capital outlay
28,150 hectares new areas generated
269,670 hectares in existing systems rehabilitated

Figures are either for or as of the end of CY2002

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NIA eyes 28% growth thru cost-effective projects...

From page H1

last year's regular budget amounting to P1.16 billion will also be utilized to complete rehabilitation and unfinished construction projects.

According to NIA Administrator Jesus Emmanuel M. Paras, the lower budget does not mean that NIA will be delivering much less. "In fact, this would serve as a challenge for NIA to work harder and optimize the use of all our existing resources, to be more innovative, resourceful, and efficient - producing as much with less financial resources," Paras said.

Among NIA priority projects this year are communal irrigation and the repair and rehabilitation sub-projects that include the aggressive implementation of Balikatan Sagip Patubig Program (BSPP) and the irrigation component of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

In addition, NIA is prioritizing irrigation development in Mindanao to strengthen the island's competitive advantage through broad-based accessibility of productive infrastructure. Now in its planning stage is the solar powered irrigation system for Mindanao's high value crops. (See related story, c.7)

"Our present priorities are based on the pronouncements of President Macapagal-Arroyo. We are realigning our resources towards small and high impact irrigation projects that are labor intensive. We believe that we can optimize the use of our limited resources if we put our investments in projects where wider areas are irrigated for every million that we spend and where farmers reap the benefits within a shorter period of time" Paras explained. "Besides," Paras added, 'we would be able to provide greater employment opportunities in the countryside.'

The administrator also said that in carrying out its tasks, NIA is guided by the following general directions: optimizing the allocation of resources and projects among regions; accelerating project implementation; developing and harnessing the full potential of existing assets to produce additional income; and, providing farmers with skills, resources and technical assistance to enable them to optimize the benefits that irrigation brings.

Paras reaffirmed the Government's commitment to bring about real economic development through accelerated agricultural and rural development. Key to this, he said, is irrigation.

2002 A Banner Year ...

From page H1

ares.

As part of NIA's thrust to make irrigators' associations effective and efficient partners of the government in operating and maintaining irrigation systems, NIA organized 217 irrigators' associations involving 19,958 farmers and 22,889 hectares. NIA also conducted training programs on basic leadership, financial management and irrigation system management.

In order to enhance the income of the farmer-members of the irrigators' associations, NIA vigorously pursued the implementation of the Integrated Farm Support Program. Under this program, farmers are provided services, financing and agricultural inputs necessary to optimize the benefits that irrigation provides.

Also last year, the allocation for irrigation projects was a record high of P10.57 billion(including carry-over funds), of which P3.41 billion went to locally-funded projects and P7.16 billion went to irrigation projects financed primarily by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank (WB), and China National Construction and Agricultural Machinery Import and Export Corporation (CAMCI).

Despite the late releases of funds, the agency managed to utilize at least 80 percent of its allotment before the year ended. This absorptive capacity is substantially higher than the 70-percent average in the previous years.

'Balikatan' empowers...

From page H1

not only focuses on projects, it also empowers the local government units... It was designed to help LGUs undertake their irrigation projects with the national government matching their resources and optimizing their limited budget for irrigation. BSPP in effect helps the LGUs strengthen their capability in the areas of project implementation, resource mobilization and collaboration with the DA/ NIAand the farmers" Paras said.

The Local Government Code of 1991 was enacted primarily to build the capability of the local government units as effective partners of the national government in nation building as it mandated the devolution of several functions of national government agencies to the LGUs and among which are the implementation of communal irrigation development.

Many LGUs did not have the financial and technical capability to undertake such projects because of the huge capital requirement. This saw the decline in the number of irrigated areas under CIS.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997 saw this gaping hole in the devolution process and sought to address this through the NIA. While AFMA further devolved the planning, design and management of CISs to LGUs, NIA was tasked to continue to provide technical assistance to the LGUs.

In 1999 the Balikatan Sagip Patubig Program (BSPP) was conceived and packaged to assist LGUs to be financially and technically capable to implement communal irrigation development.

'Balikatan' is synonymous to the more popular term 'Bayanihan' which refers to cooperation, a trait akin to the culture of the Filipinos. Thus the NIA's Balikatan Sagip Patubig Program (BSPP).

Priority is given to communal projects and systems in areas with LGUs and IAs capable and ready to provide necessary counterpart funds. Provinces belonging to the Club 20, those with annual household income below $1,600, such as Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Maguinadanao, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Ifugao, Lanao del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Northern Samar, Masbate, Sarangani, Western Samar, Davao Oriental, Negros Oriental, Zamboanga del Norte, Siquijor, Eastern Samar, Agusan del Norte, North Cotabato, Surigao del Sur and Davao del Sur are prioritized subject to their willingness to participate. Candidate projects are evaluated according to technical feasibility, sustainability after rehabilitation, economic viability and other considerations.

The program covers the construction, repair and rehabilitation of communal irrigations with the three parties sharing the actual cost of the project. IAs share labor expenses equivalent to 10 to 20 percent. LGUs, depending on its classification, provide counterpart funding of up to 45 percent of the project cost. DA/ NIA shoulder the remaining cost. IA and LGU shares may be in cash or in kind like labor, materials and/ or use of LGU-owned equipment.

Feedback received from field implementors in its initial implementation (Dec. 1999 – Dec. 2001) however revealed that the majority of LGUs although belonging to 1st and 3rd class, found difficulty in providing the required counterpart. Hence, the NIA Administrator Jesus Emmanuel M. Paras, in his directive last February 2002, reduced the cost sharing arrangement to 10% of the total project cost for the IAs and LGUs that do not have the capability to put up the required counterpart.

This 'Balikatan' is moving people and things on the road to development. It accentuates the fact that with cooperation, everything is easier and more achievable.

• About The Special Report •

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Jeffrey Beltran Constantino
Director, Special Reports

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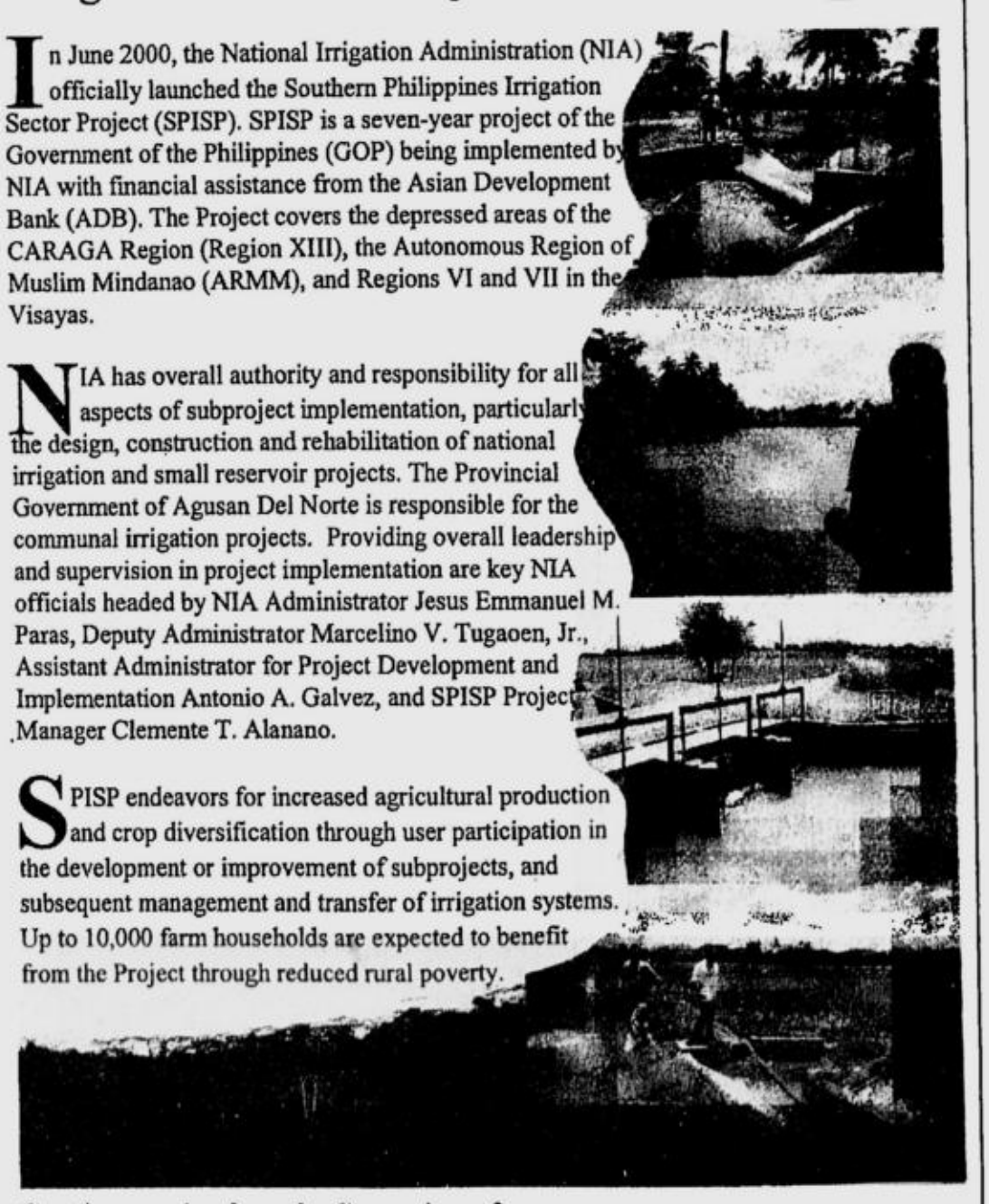
Congratulations to the National Irrigation Administration on the Occasion of it's 40th Anniversary!!!

Southern Philippines Irrigation Sector Project

In June 2000, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) officially launched the Southern Philippines Irrigation Sector Project (SPISP). SPISP is a seven-year project of the Government of the Philippines (GOP) being implemented by NIA with financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Project covers the depressed areas of the CARAGA Region (Region XIII), the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and Regions VI and VII in the Visayas.

NIA has overall authority and responsibility for all aspects of subproject implementation, particularly the design, construction and rehabilitation of national irrigation and small reservoir projects. The Provincial Government of Agusan Del Norte is responsible for the communal irrigation projects. Providing overall leadership and supervision in project implementation are key NIA officials headed by NIA Administrator Jesus Emmanuel M. Paras, Deputy Administrator Marcelino V. Tugaoen, Jr., Assistant Administrator for Project Development and Implementation Antonio A. Galvez, and SPISP Project Manager Clemente T. Alanano.

SPISP endeavors for increased agricultural production and crop diversification through user participation in the development or improvement of subprojects, and subsequent management and transfer of irrigation systems. Up to 10,000 farm households are expected to benefit from the Project through reduced rural poverty.



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ONE-ON-ONE WITH NIA ADMINISTRATOR PARAS

Growth, Financial Health from FAT

Administrator Jesus Emmanuel M. Paras took the helm at NIA on May 29, 2001, four months into the Arroyo Administration and following the short-lived stint of two other Administrators.

At that time, the collection of the Irrigation Service Fees (ISF) was at a dismal 35%. NIA had racked up payables exceeding P100 million, and incurred a net operating loss of over P120 million.

Field personnel had not received their pay for over five months, leading to wide-spread demoralization, which in turn bred factionalism, intrigues and pocket resistance to attempts to improve the agency's operations.

On NIA's 39th Anniversary last year, Mr. Paras looked back to his first seven (7) months at NIA as " extremely eventful and challenging." At that time he had instituted strong measures to bolster ISF collections, restore employee morale, and put NIA back on track to growth.

"It was a politically difficult task," was his succinct description of NIA's effort to resume the collections dropped by the previous administration.

Today, the average ISF collection rate is placed at 54%, hitting a record high of P626 million for 2002.

In a wide-ranging interview, Mr. Paras provides insights on that turnaround and shares his vision of NIA's mandate under the Arroyo Administration.

Q. What is the importance of irrigation in the development of a country like the Philippines? Why does the Arroyo Administration invest heavily in irrigation?

A. Sustainable economic growth and poverty alleviation can only be realized if there is real agricultural development. This much the President, who is an economist, has emphasized often enough.

Irrigation helps prime the countryside for agricultural development. It paves the way for the introduction of new farm enterprise and technology mixes, which, in turn, further increase agricultural productivity. It functions as a development pole in the countryside where increased output and population concentration attract additional services and infrastructure. In effect the over-all and long-run impact of irrigation is not only increased agricultural production and food sufficiency but also greater employment opportunities, higher income and enhanced economic activities.

Q. How much has the Arroyo Administration invested in irrigation and what are the results, so far?

A. In her State of the Nation Address in July 2001, the President directed that at least P5.0 billion be provided for irrigation per year. In 2001, we had a budget of P5.72 billion. Last year, it was a record high of P10.34 billion, but this year, it is down to P5.76 billion. This does not mean though, that we will deliver much less. The challenge here is to optimize the use of available resources by being more innovative, resourceful and efficient.

This year, we hope to generate about 35,000 hectares of new farmlands and rehabilitate irrigation structures covering 175,000 hectares nationwide. All in all, 210,800 farm families are likely to benefit from our programs.

Last year, the combined area reached a record high of 297,800 hectares with at least 368,700 farm families benefited, resulting in a yearly incremental increase in palay production of at least 525,200 metric tons.

Q. How about for the next three years, what is in store for irrigation development?

A. Under our updated Medium Term Irrigation Program for CY2004-2006 and based on conservative national revenue projections, we could raise investments of about P18 billion. This does not include the irrigation component of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, which normally amounts to at least P1.0 billion a year.

> ***"With President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo continuing and even bolstering what her father had started, the realization of her father's vision is now within our immediate grasp. Good for NIA. Good for the farmers. Good for our country."***

During this three year- period, we hope to open for irrigation a total of 48,390 hectares of farmlands, rehabilitate existing irrigation systems, and restore a total of 449,700 hectares as irrigated farmlands.

This investment plan is quite conservative, and we will be able to pour much more money into irrigation as our economy picks up and overall revenue generation improves.

Q. In pursing irrigation development, what are your priorities?

A. Our present priorities are based on the pronouncements of President Macapagal-Arroyo. First, we are realigning our resources to small but high impact irrigation projects that are labor intensive. We can optimize the use of our limited resources in projects where wider areas are irrigated per million peso investment, and the benefits are reaped by the farmers within a short period of time. Besides, we would be able to provide greater employment opportunities in the countryside.

Among these projects are communal irrigation projects and our repair and rehabilitation subprojects under a number of programs, including the Balik Sagip Patubig Program (BSPP) and the irrigation component of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

Another priority of NIA is Mindanao's irrigation development. Following the imprimatur of President Arroyo, we have allocated more resources for Mindanao. In the projects now under the planning stage, like the solar powered irrigation systems for high value crops, we are also focusing on Mindanao.

Q. In planning and implementing your projects and delivering your services, what serves as your or NIA's inspiration?

A. The farmers, of course. They are our reasons for being! All of the projects that we undertake are designed to improve the quality of their lives. I have often stressed this perspective. Before, NIAns saw their accomplishments in terms of dams completed, kilometers of canals constructed and hectares irrigated. Now, they see these in terms of farmers benefited, rise in farm employment and improvement in the income of the farmers.

Q. What are the major issues facing irrigation development?

A. The Philippines has 3.1 million hectares of potential irrigable area. But only 45 percent is irrigated. For the past decades, we have increased our irrigated area by only one to two percent yearly. The reasons are many, foremost of which is the classic lack of funds.

Our capability to expand irrigation coverage is also limited by a number of factors: Surface water sources like streams are becoming unreliable. Groundwater sources are becoming restrictive due to extensive pumping for domestic use in the rural areas. Watershed degradation brings erosion and flooding during the wet season and drought during the dry season. Only five percent of the 4.8 million-hectare watershed areas above the irrigation systems have stable forest growth.

In the operation and maintenance of our existing irrigation systems, we are faced with low irrigation efficiencies, wasteful irrigation practices by farmers, and degradation of our irrigation systems.

Q. How do you address these concerns?

A. We have sought loans and grants from multilateral and bilateral institutions. We are also in partnership with civic organizations and the private sector in planning, financing and implementing small scale irrigation projects. We have made it a practice to seek active participation of the local government units and the farmers in irrigation development through cost sharing. On a limited scale, we are constructing small water impounding projects that are undeniably less costly than big irrigation projects. In the operation and maintenance of our irrigation systems, we have engaged the farmers who are members of irrigators associations. We have devoted considerable resources in rehabilitating existing systems which require much less resources on a per-hectare basis. We have taken steps towards the adoption of a volumetric pricing scheme. Lastly, we have collaborated with various government and private institutions with respect to the development, rehabilitation and maintenance of watershed areas.

Q. Do you think that you have fulfilled your mission and realized your vision for NIA?

A. Two years ago, I came here with a mission from the President and the following vision for NIA: a corporation that provides its employees a healthy working environment and compensation & benefits that are at par with other service-oriented government agencies; a financially stable and independent NIA; and a service-oriented corporation that effectively and efficiently implements irrigation projects and delivers irrigation-related services to the farmers.

To achieve this vision, I armed myself with FAT – *Fairness, Accountability and Transparency.* Every action or decision that I took (and continue to take), I subjected to the FAT test. I would like to think that the FAT test has effectively worked for me here at NIA.

Q. In closing, what are your thoughts as NIA celebrates its 40th Anniversary?

A. When the late President Diosdado Macapagal signed RA 3601 into law 40 years ago, creating the National Irrigation Administration, I suppose he had in mind the millions of farmers whose lives would be improved and the countryside which would be developed with the provision of efficient irrigation systems. In 40 years' time, NIA has grown tremendously with P37.7 billion worth of assets, more than P60 billion worth of projects, 191 national and 6,700 communal irrigation systems serving at least one million farm families, and more than 10,000 employees nationwide.

The 1.4 million hectares of irrigated farmlands that generate higher agricultural production and employment and bring about higher incomes for the farmers are concrete proof that NIA has lived up to the vision of the late President.

With President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo continuing and even bolstering what her father had started, the realization of her father's vision is now within our immediate grasp. Good for NIA. Good for the farmers. Good for our country.

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With our greetings on the occasion of NIA's

40th Anniversary

is our hope to be able to continue contributing to agricultural development in the Philippines

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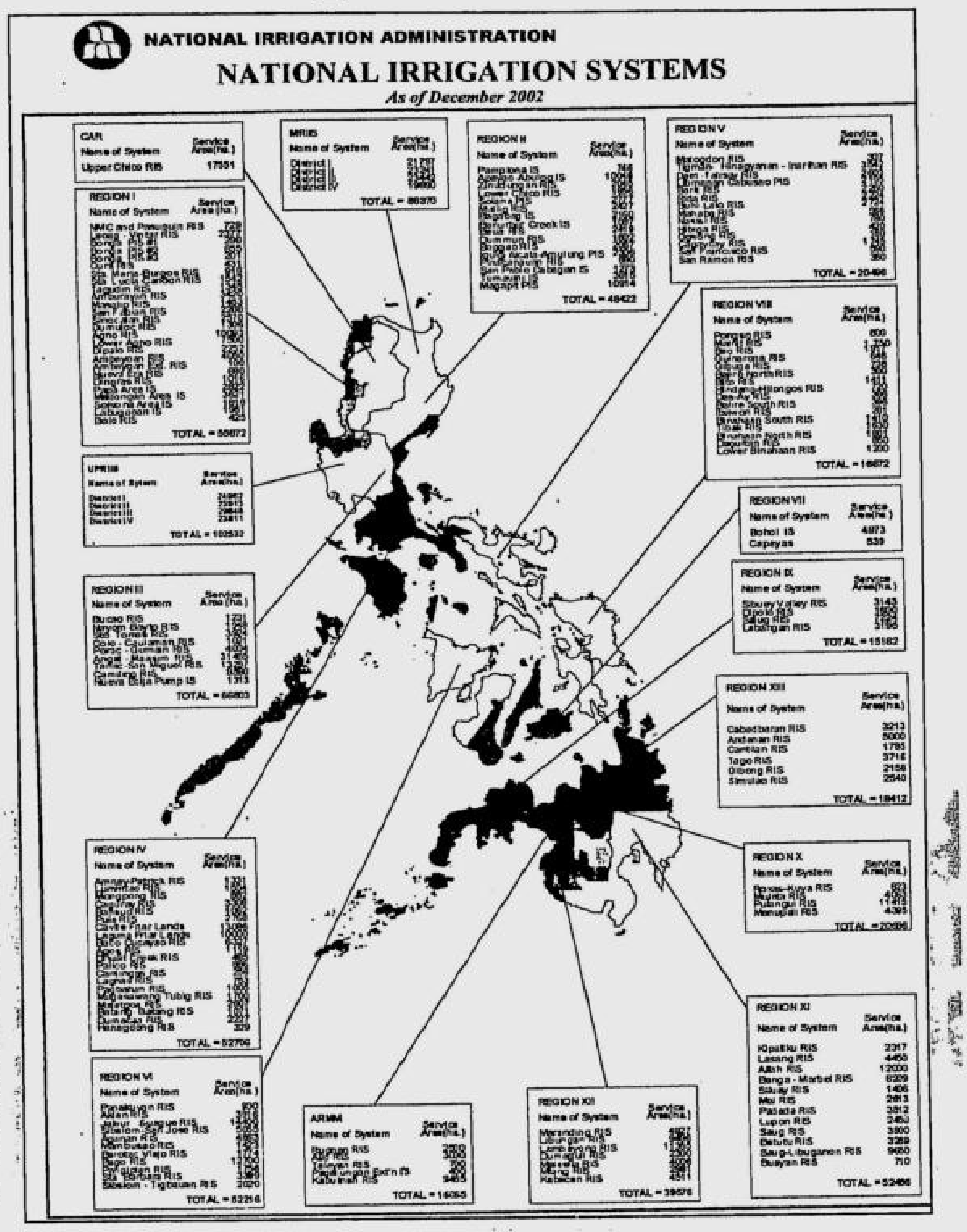
Irrigation projects worth P65 billion to advance agri development

NIA vigorously pursues the implementation of 16 major irrigation projects at an aggregate cost of over P60 billion and a number of other locally funded projects.These projects cover both the construction of new irrigation facilities as well as the rehabilitation of existing ones. Most of them are funded by multilateral and bilateral institutions like the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). A number are locally funded and are joint undertakings between the NIA and local government units and irrigation associations. JBIC provides about 70 percent of the financing requirements of the country's major irrigation projects.The major foreign-assisted irrigation projects are concentrated in the rice-producing provinces of Luzon, including the ₱ 5.8 billion Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and Power Project in Nueva Vizcaya, the ₱ 4.4 billion Pampanga Delta Development Project, and the ₱ 623 million Tarlac Groundwater Irrigation System Reactivation Projects. All three are funded By JBIC.In the Visayas, NIA's biggest project are the ₱ 2.38 billion Bohol Irrigation Project, and the P1.8 billion Help for Catubig Agricultural Advancement Project in Northern Samar. In Mindanao, the agency is overseeing the completion of the P 2.5 billion Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation Project in North Cotabato and Maguindanao and the P 2.05 billion Lower Agusan Development Project. These two major projects are also funded by JBIC. Once completed, the Agno River Integrated Irrigation Project (ARIIP) and Casecnan projects in Luzon would also become environment-friendly sources of electricity as the water collected in the dams would be trapped to generate hydroelectric power before being eventually released to irrigate the nearby rice fields. San Roque's irrigation component (Agno River Integrated Irrigation Project) is initially funded by the national government and is being considered under the 27th Yen Loan Package of JBIC.

Casecnan's irrigation component includes the construction of a tunnel into the Pantabangan reservoir to augment the irrigation water requirements of the Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation System. Also, in Luzon, the P 1.34 billion Banaoang Pump Irrigation situated in Ilocos Sur is on the detailed engineering stage. The project is funded and undertaken by the China National Constructional and Agricultural and Machinery Import and Export Corporation (CAMC).

The major locally-funded project in Luzon include the Apayao-Abulog Irrigation System Improvement Project (P850.0 million) in Cagayan, Addalam River Irrigation Project (P994.0 million) in Isabela, Agno River Integrated Irrigation Project (P6.90 billion) in tarlac and Pangasinan, and Balog-Balog Multipurpose Irrigation Project (P12.028 billion) in Tarlac.

Among the community-based projects of NIA are the Small Reservoir Irrigation Project (SRIP) (P3.2 billion), and the ADB-assisted Southern Philippines Irrigation Sector Project (SPISP) (P4.169 billion). the SRIP includes the construction of Tangilad SRIP (P286.27 million) in bataan, Nasigid SRIP (P243.0 million) in Negros Oriental, Talibon SRIP (P250.0 million) in Bohol, and Aulo Irrigation Project (P320.0 million) in Palayan City, Nueva Ecija. On the other hand, the SPISP comprises of three core projects in Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Negros Occidental, and lanao del Sur.



Irrigation vital to developing Agrarian Reform Communities

THE COMPREHENSIVE Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) today remains a vital program of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration. Her special attention to the Program may be attributed to the commitment to land reform earlier shown by her father, President Diosdado Macapagal, who strongly batted for the enactment and signed the first agrarian reform law (Republic Act No. 3844 or the Agricultural Land Reform Code) in 1963.

Under RA 6657, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, land reform is primarily anchored on land acquisition and distribution. Yet, CARP cannot create a greater impact in uplifting the socio-economic status of its beneficiaries by just land distribution. Support services, such as irrigation, must likewise be provided for the Program to ultimately attain its objectives. Thus, the National Irrigation Administration Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program-Irrigation Component (NIA CARP-IC) was born in June 1989.

The NIA CARP-IC was designed to eventually emancipate the Filipino farmers, through the construction and rehabilitation of irrigation projects. Now on its second phase by virtue of RA 8532 which extended the Program to another ten years, the NIA CARP-IC has consistently implemented the irrigation component of the Program which has spurred economic growth especially in the countryside. Todate, 363 projects covering an area of 90,010 hectares have been completed and benefited 52,277 farmer-beneficiaries. In addition, 96 projects are currently on-going with a target area of 25,533 hectares.

In 1992, the implementing strategy of CARP shifted to the Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs) where land reform support services are carried out. An offshoot of this strategy is the conceptualization of the *Agrarian Reform Infrastructure Support Project (ARISP)* and the **Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (ARCDP)** which are both foreign-assisted projects.

The ARCDP is being implemented in twelve (12) selected provinces. As of May 31 this year, 23 irrigation sub-projects covering 9,136 hectares have been completed, while 25 others are under construction which, when completed, will cover an area of 4,817 hectares of new farmlands and 1,027 hectares of rehabilitated area.

On the other hand, ARISP as implemented in ARCs nationwide aims to form Irrigators Associations (IAs) and cooperatives which are viable and self-sustaining to boost agricultural production by constructing irrigation and post-harvest facilities. Under ARISP I, NIA CARP-IC completed a total of 77 irrigation projects with 13607 hectares of service area and put up post-harvest facilities that benefited some 11,041 farmer-beneficiaries.

A study conducted by the Institute of Agrarian and Rurban (Rural/Urban) Development Studies of University of the Philippine-Los Baños (IARDS-UPLB) cited the positive impact of ARISP projects on farmers. Higher rice yield per hectare, more croppings per year, higher on-farm income, higher household income and better access to support services are among the tangible results of ARISP implementation.

This initial success gave rise to the birth of ARISP II which started in June 2002 at a higher total cost of P6.74-billion, P2.935-billion of which is allocated for irrigation. Under ARISP II, NIA CARP-IC has already completed five projects with an accomplished area of 2,738 hectares. In addition, 77 projects are currently on-going, 172 others are in the feasibility study stage and 193 projects are under the detailed engineering stage.

NIA Administrator Jesus Emmanuel M. Paras and CARP-IC Project Manager Reynaldo C. Adao said that once these CARP-IC projects are completed, the life of farmer-beneficiaries in the ARCs is expected to improve substantially.

With these achievements and the unfinished task that lies ahead, the entire workforce of NIA CARP-IC remains committed to carry on with the same commitment and dedication to help uplift the welfare of agrarian reform beneficiaries.

Greetings, Felicitations & Cheers to

NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION

On its 40th Anniversary

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DIREC

NATIONAL IRRIGATI
EDSA, Diliman, 1100, Quezon City Trunkline Co
Website: www

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FIELD OFFICE BASED			
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Estanislao R. Najera (Project Engineer)	Addalam River Irrigation Project	Saguday, Quirino	
Reynaldo C. Mencias	Agno River Integrated Irrigation Project	Tumana, Rosales, Pangasinan	
Vicente R. Vicmudo	Balog-Balog Multipurpose Project	Matatalaib, Tarlac City	vicmudo@mozcom.com
Modesto G. Membreve (OIC)	Bohol Irrigation Project II	Calanggaman, Ubay, Bohol	
Santiago P. Gorospe, Jr.	Banaoang Pump Irrigation Project	Bahet, San Ildefonso, Ilocos	
Santiago P. Estaban, Jr.	Bago River Irrigation System River Irrigation Project	Bago City, Negros Occidental	
Catalino S. Damasco, Jr.	Bubunawan River Irrigation Project	Baungon, Bukidnon	

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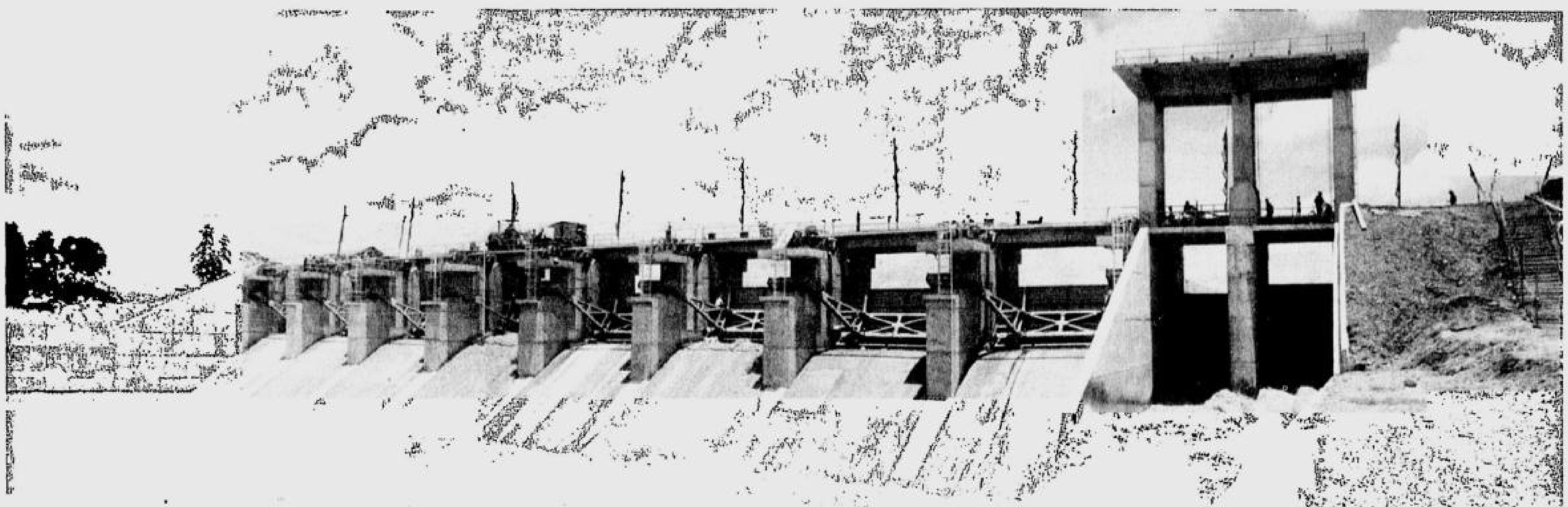

WITH MORE NATIONAL, COMMUNAL IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

1.39 million hectares irrigated

A total of 1.387 million hectares or 44.4 percent of the 3.126 million hectares of potential irrigable area in the whole country already have irrigation facilities. Of the aggregate irrigated area, 49.7 percent are being serviced by 191 national irrigation systems; 37.7 percent, by 6,602 communal irrigation systems; and 12.6 percent, by 4,001 pump irrigation systems nationwide.

With the current rate of irrigation development, which is limited by funding constraints, putting to irrigation the whole of the remaining 55.6 percent would take NIA at least three more decades to complete. Since high-lift or distant-location streams, and moderate-slope and depression-fettered den terrain dominate the remaining areas, irrigation development cost would rise to ₱ 300,000 a hectare.

A big chunk of the currently irrigated area receives irrigation from pump systems—facilities serving 2~6 hectares each owned and operated by individual farmers or small groups of farmers. These rice irrigation systems are predominantly diesel-engine-driven centrifugal pumps drawing water from shallow aquifer or surface water with a total lift of less than 12 meters.

NIA develops (designs and constructs) areas of 100~1,000 hectares each into communal systems, then turns them over to the irrigators associations for operations and maintenance. Associations with equity of 30 percent of system direct cost benefit from forgone loan balance while those with below 30 percent amortize at no interest the balance in at most 50 years.

Irrigation Operations

NIA spends, on the average, P1,057 per hectare to operate and P2,299 per hectare to maintain its irrigation systems, with that of pump systems proving to be more costly because of the high cost of electricity and repairs. To cover the cost of operating and maintaining these systems, NIA collects irrigation service fee from the beneficiaries in the national systems.

Last year, NIA spent ₱ 674 million for the operations and maintenance of the national systems because it collected only ₱ 675 million from irrigation service fee from a collectibles of more than P1.0 billion. Because of low ISF payments, NIA is unable to provide optimum maintenance to its systems.

As a reform in the sector, NIA had embarked on the management transfer of whole or sections of national systems to the pertinent eligible irrigators associations or federations. In addition, NIA endeavors to adopt volumetric method of water measurement and pricing to promote efficient use of irrigation water at a time where declining water resources had set in.

Irrigation Benefits

Irrigation improves crop yields because farmers are encouraged to adopt improved agricultural and crop cultural practices when they receive irrigation services. Increase in crop yields and in cropping intensity, impacted by irrigation, results in an increase in crop production, which promotes the rice self-sufficiency program and improves farm incomes.

SHIFTING FROM 'DOING THINGS FOR THE PEOPLE'

NIA partners with farmers, LGUs in irrigation projects

IN THE early years since its creation in 1963 by virtue of Republic Act 3601, operations of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) was characterized by the dictum "doing-things-for-the people" as NIA delivered the water while the farmers received and paid irrigation fees in return.

At some point, this system – doing all the plans, designs, constructions and operations of the irrigation systems - resulted in the poor maintenance and reduced area coverage of various irrigation facilities. NIA officials realized that to sustain the feasibility of these projects, they must also involve the recepient community.

Farmers were organized into Irrigator's Associations (IAs) to be registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). IAs enabled farmers to participate in the planning, construction or rehabilitation as well as in the operation and maintenance of irrigation systems and to attain juridical personality for negotiating with government and private institutions. Over the years, the number of organized IAs grew with a total membership of about 683,491 farmers all over the country.

As a result of this growing number, the National Confederation of Irrigator's Associations, Inc. (NCIA) was organized as an aggrupation of all organized IAs in the entire country with Engr. Amador D. Dulig, a farmer-beneficiary of Magat River Integrated Irrigation System in Isabela as its founding national president.

NCIA sought to establish itself as the leading self-reliant national farmers' organization that is committed to uplift the quality of life of the Filipino farmers and their families. It hopes to maintain linkage and coordinated support of all government institutions and non-government organizations in order to attain desired assistance and to represent the interest of irrigation farmers and vigorously work with concerned policy-making bodies for their support to attain agricultural development.

Over the years, the NCIA has continuously conducted activities in pursuit of these ends. Among its major accomplishment were: signing of a tripartite agreement among NIA, Agricultural training Institute (ATI), and NCIA for the provision of capability training programs for the IAs; endorsed for the early passage of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act; attendance of its Board of Trustees to the trainors training on rice seed production at PhilRice; membership of the NCIA president in the Philippine Farmers Advisory Board; assistance to its member-federations in establishing linkages with local government and non-government institutions for the provision of agricultural support services to farmers; fund-generation activities to support its various projects; and participation in the 2001 party-list elections.

Last year, NCIA held two Board of Trustees (BOT) meetings, the major highlights of which were: a resolution requesting the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) to reduce the water right/permit fee; proposed amendment giving the presidents of Provincial Federations of IAs rights to directly vote the NCIA national president; requested the government through NIA on relaxing some requirements for the availment of loans through the Integrated Farm Support Project (IFSP); endorsed the accreditation of IAs to participate in the National Food Authority's "Farmers as Rice Importer Program"; and a resolution requesting the Supreme Court to lift the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) on the assumption of the NCIA party-list representative in the House of Representatives.

This year, NCIA sets its sight to greater challenges under the leadership of its president Orlando V. Soriano. The organization of farmer-beneficiaries to harness their full potential is the foundation of NIA in pursuit of the national government's goal of developing more areas for irrigation in order to attain increased agricultural productivity and sustained food self-sufficiency.

...TORY

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Greetings to the National Irrigation Administration on its 40th Anniversary

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Vice President, Finance & Administration

Jose B. del Rosario, Jr.
Chairman & President

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NIA honors outstanding workers, irrigators

From page H1

awards during NIA's 40th Anniversary celebration tomorrow, Saturday, June 21, 2003.

Leading the CY2002 awardees are: Mr. Vicente E. Galvez of Region 2, Regional Irrigation Manager of the Year; Mr. Alejandro L. Alberica of Lalik RIS in Region 11, Irrigation Superintendent of the Year; Mr. Julius S. Maquiling of Bukidnon PIO, Provincial Irrigation Officer of the Year; and Mr. Romulo S. Garcia of Region 12, Regional Equipment Manager of the Year.

Buluan-Pigcawayan Irrigators' Association (IA) in North Cotabato, Region 12 is chosen as the Most Outstanding IA for communal irrigation systems while Bagong Silang Irrigators' Association in Davao del Sur, Region 11, Most Outstanding IA for national irrigation systems. As a way of promoting excellence among the farmer-members of irrigators associations, CE Casecnan Water and Energy Co. provides plaque and cash awards to these two IAs, which they can utilize to further strengthen their associations and promote the welfare of the farmers.

Six former and present officials of the Corporation and one irrigators association have been elevated to the Hall of Fame for three years of outstanding performance. They are: Abundio B. Valdez, Jr. (Regional Irrigation Manager); Reynaldo C. Mencias (Project Manager); Lorene V. Golez and Amado B. Serrano (Provincial Irrigation Officer); Orlando C. Hondrade and Patricio G. Juan (Irrigation Superintendent); and Badagoy IA (Irrigators' Association).

The CY2002 complete list of outstanding employees and officials as well as irrigators associations are as follows:

HALL OF FAME

1 ABUNDIO B. VALDEZ Regional Irrigation Manager Region XI
2 REYNALDO C. MENCIAS Project Manager PDDP-IC
3 ORLANDO C. HONDRADE Irrigation Superintendent Pulangui/ Roxas-Kuya
4 PATRICIO G. JUAN Irrigation Superintendent Pulangui/Roxas-Kuya
5 LORENE V. GOLEZ Provincial Irrigation Officer South Cotabato
6 AMADO B. SERRANO Provincial Irrigation Officer Davao del Sur
7 BADAGOY IRRIGATION ASSOCIATION Davao del Sur

OUTSTANDING REGIONAL IRRIGATION MANAGER

1 VICENTE E. GALVEZ RIM of the Year 2002 Region 2

IRRIGATION SUPERINTENDENT

1 ALEJANDRO L. ALBERCA Irrigation Superintendent of the Year 2002 LALIK RIS, Region XI

OUTSTANDING IRRIGATION SUPERINTENDENTS

1 MARIANO G. DANCEL District IV MRIIS
2 FLORENTINO C. BANIQUED, JR. District I MRIIS
3 JAIME G. CARAG District II MRIIS
4 PELAGIO S. GAMAD, JR. District III MRIIS
5 ALBARITO B. DIMSON Andanan RIS Region 10
6 GAUDENCIO O. RAMOS Muleta RIS Region 10
7 ALFREDO L. OBENZA Maranding RIS Region 10
8 EDUARDO T. DRACULAN Mal RIS Region 11
9 PEDRO B. LOMUTOS, JR. Balutu RIS Region 11
10 FELIX M. RAZO Lupon RIS Region 11
11 TEODOTO B. ABBOT Padada RIS Region 11
12 LOVIE M. FRANADA Saug-Libuganon Left RIS Region 11
13 ORLANDO A. TIBANG Siluay-Busyan RIS Region 12
14 MEDEL P. MAWILE Cabadbaran-Tagulbo RIS Region 13
15 BERNARDINO S. GALORIO Gibong RIS Region 13
16 VICTOR L. ALEGARIO Tago RIS Region 13
17 MADANTE P. GANOTISI Simulao RIS Region 13
18 ANTONIO C. LARA Lower Chico RIS Region 2
19 CARLITO F. PENTECOSTES, JR. Baua RIS Region 2
20 WILFREDO U. SALVADOR San Pablo-Cabagan RIS Region 2
21 BENJAMIN F. BAYANI Apayao-Abulog RIS Region 2
22 ERNESTO G. COLLADO Banurbur Creek IS Region 2
23 WILFREDO B. DINGAYAN Zinundungan RIS Region 2
24 JAMES R. JOSE Dummun RIS Region 2
25 LEONARDO B. VILLEGAS Iguig-Alcala-Amulong PIS Region 2
26 HECTOR P. CARDENAS Magapit PIS Region 2
27 GUALFREDO C. MARTINEZ Tumauini RIS Region 2
28 DEMETRIO V. COSTALES Mallig RIS Region 2
29 WILLIAM P. RAGODON Tigman-Hinagyanan-Inarihan RIS Region 5
30 GERARDO C. VERDEFLOR Rinconada Integrated IS Region 5
31 OLIMPIO J. GALAGALA, JR. Bohol RIS Region 7
32 ANTONIO A. VIZCARRA Bao RIS Region 8
33 ARTURO M. ABARCA Bito RIS Region 8
34 FRANCISCO D. GARCIA Malnit-Pongso RIS Region 8
35 ALBERTO B. LACUAREN Salug-Dipolo RIS Region 9

PROVINCIAL IRRIGATION OFFICERS

1 JULIUS S. MAQUILING Provincial Irrigation Officer of the Year 2002 Bukidnon PIO, Region 10

OUTSTANDING PROVINCIAL IRRIGATION OFFICERS

1 DOMINGO R. ONZA Apayao PIO CAR
2 NORMALITO B. TAMAYO Ifugao PIO CAR
3 TRAVIS A. GAWIGAWEN Kalinga PIO CAR
4 ALFREDO L. OBENZA Lanao del Norte PIO Region 10
5 ESTELITA S. SUMILE Misamis Occidental PIO Region 10
6 DIOSCORO A. TUTOR Misamis Oriental PIO Region 10
7 CORNELIO M. BAUTISTA, JR. Davao del Norte PIO Region 11
8 SUSANO H. HORCERA Davao Oriental PIO Region 11
9 UMARKAIS U. MAMALAC Maguindanao PIO Region 12
10 C'ZAR M. SULAIK North Cotabato PIO Region 12
11 ORLANDO A. TIBANG Sarangani PIO Region 12
12 VICTOR L. GO Sultan Kudarat PIO Region 12
13 PACIFICO C. CALIBAYAN Agusan del Sur PIO Region 13
14 JOEL A. YAPE Agusan del Norte PIO Region 13
15 HERMINIGILDO T. GUILLENA Surigao del Norte PIO Region 13
16 VICTOR L. ALEGARIO Surigao del Sur PIO Region 13
17 FLORENCIO F. ALBANO Cagayan-Batanes PIO Region 2
18 SANTIAGO L. BULAN Nueva Vizcaya PIO Region 2
19 ROMEO M. LOPEZ Aurora PIO Region 3
20 NICASIO C. PAGDANGANAN, JR. Batangas PIO Region 4
21 EFREN R. ROQUEZA Cavite PIO Region 4
22 BIENVENIDO S. TESNADO Quezon PIO Region 4
23 EDILBERTO C. BEREÑA Rizal PIO Region 4
24 ROMEO G. QUIZA Cebu PIO Region 7
25 DEXTER G. PATROCINIO Negros Oriental PIO Region 7
26 OSCAR A. SALAMIDA Western Samar PIO Region 8
27 BONIFACIO A. JUDILLA Zamboanga del Norte PIO Region 9
28 NEMINDO G. REGALADO Zamboanga del Sur PIO Region 9

REGIONAL EQUIPMENT MANAGERS

1 ROMULO S. GARCIA REM of the Year 2002 Region 12

LIST OF OUTSTANDING IAs

NATIONAL LEVEL

COMMUNAL IRRIGATION SYSTEMS: CIS

1 BULUAN-PIGCAWAYAN IA,Buluan Communal Irrigation System, Pigcawayan, North Cotabato NIA Region XII

Most Outstanding

2 Lower Marber IA, Lower Marber Communal Irrigation System, Bansalan, Davao del Sur , NIA Region XI, 1st Runner -Up
3 MAO-AO IA, Ma-ao Communal Irrigation System Bago City, Negros Occidental, NIA Region VI, 2nd Runner-Up

NATIONAL IRRIGATION SYSTEMS: NIS

4 BAGONG SILANG IA, District IV, Alicia, Isabela, NIA MRIIS

Most Oustanding

5 BONGA PUMP NO. 1 IA, Ilocos Norte Irrigation Service, Sarrat, Ilocos Norte, NIA Region I, 1st Runner-Up
6 SAMICASA IA, Aganan-Sta. Barbarra River Irrigation System, San Miguel, Iloilo, NIA Region VI, 2nd Runner-Up
7 UPPER SINAYAWAN FIA, Padada River Irrigation System, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur, NIA Region XI, 2nd Runner-Up

REGIONAL OUTSTANDING IAs: CIS

No. IAName Address REGION

1 ABRA RIVER IA Abra River Irrigation SystemBangued, Abra NIA CAR
2 RIVERSIDE IA San Juan Communal Irrigation SystemUmingan, Pangasinan NIA Region I
3 GANANO IA Ganano Communal Irrigation SystemDiffun, Quirino NIA Region II
4 CABAGO IA Cabago Pump Irrigation SystemCalumpit, Bulacan NIA Region III
5 TUMBAGA IA Tumbaga Communal Irrigation SystemSariaya, Quezon NIA Region IV
6 SAFIMCO Maybatang Communal Irrigation SystemBuhi, Camarines Sur NIA Region V
7 MA-AO IA Ma-ao Communal Irrigation SystemBago City, Negros Occidental NIA Region VI
8 BATS IRRIGATORS MULTI-PURPOSE COOP Busaw Communal Irrigation SystemMaribojoc, Bohol NIA Region VII
9 UPPER PANANSALAN IA Panansalan Communal Irrigation SystemHinunangan, Southern Leyte NIA Region VIII
10 TIMBABOY-POBLACION IA Timbaboy Communal Irrigation SystemMidsalip, Zamboanga del Sur NIA Region IX
11 DELAPA-MIBANTANG-STA. CRUZ IA Delapa, Quezon, Bukidnon NIA Region X
12 LOWER MARBER IA Lower Marber Communal Irrigation SystemBansalan, Davao del Sur NIA Region XI
13 BULUAN-PIGCAWAYAN IA Buluan Communal Irrigation SystemPigcawayan, North Cotabato NIA Region XII
14 BOAN BIDA IA Boan Communal Irrigation SystemRosario, Agusan del Sur NIA Region XIII

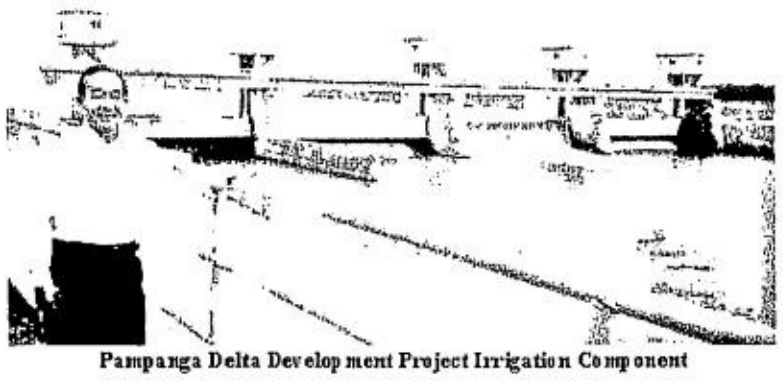
REGIONAL OUTSTANDING IAs: NIS

No. IAName Address Region

1 BONGA PUMP NO. 1 IA Ilocos Norte Irrigation ServiceSarrat, Ilocos Norte NIA Region I
2 BAGONG SILANG IA District IVAlicia, Isabela NIA MRIIS
3 SIMIBAP IA Tumauini River Irrigation SystemTumauini, Isabela NIA Region II
4 FINZA IA Pampanga Irrigation Management OfficeFloridablanca, Pampanga NIA Region III
5 SANTAMASI IA Santa Maria-Mayor River Irrigation SystemSanta Maria, Laguna NIA Region IV
6 SAJUFIA Buhi-Lalo River Irrigation SystemBuhi, Camarines Sur NIA Region V
7 SAMICASA IA Aganan-Sta. Barbara River Irrigation SystemSan Miguel, Iloilo NIA Region VI
8 TAMULCOM FISCO IA Bito River Irrigation SystemJavier, Leyte NIA Region VIII
9 UPPER SINAYAWAN FIA Padada River Irrigation SystemHagonoy, Davao del Sur NIA Region XI
10 MAL RIS DIV C IA Malasila River Irrigation SystemM'lang, North Cotabato NIA Region XII
11 SIAGAO GRAIN PLANTERS IA Tago River Irrigation SystemSan Miguel, Surigao del Sur NIA Region XIII

CONGRATULATIONS!

NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY



Pampanga Delta Development Project Irrigation Component

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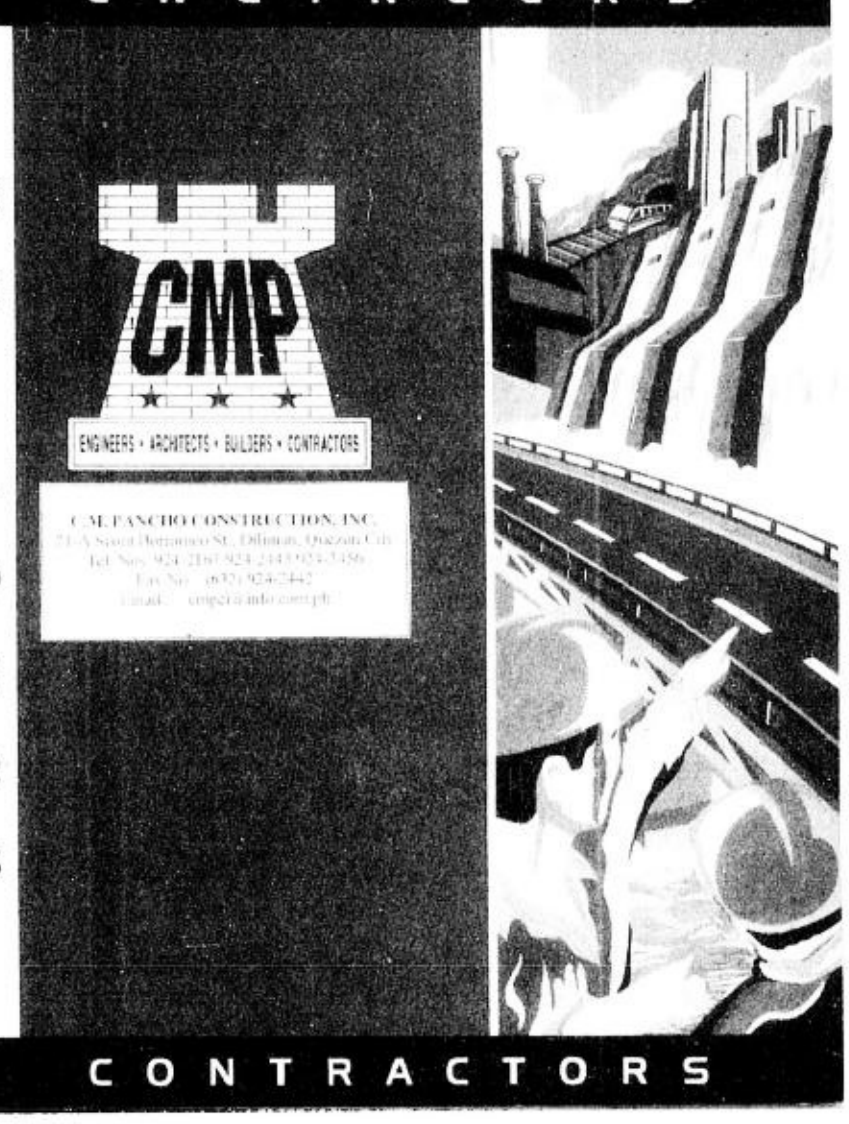

Congratulations to NIA on its 40th anniversary

The Project:

The Bago River Irrigation System Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (BRISRIP) is a countryside development undertaking of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) that was originally instituted in the late 1980's. The project covers three cities and four municipalities in Negros Occidental with a total irrigable service area of 13,277 hectares of lowland rice farming system. Moreover, the irrigation system has about 34 kilometers of main/sub main canals and 157 kilometers of lateral/sub lateral canals laced with 171 kilometers of service roads and 7.4 kilometers of access road.

NIA's mission is to locate, develop sources of irrigation water, provide adequate irrigation services and generate support for a bountiful harvest that shall lead to a better quality of life for the farming communities in the area. The program envisages a dynamic and functional NIA-Irrigators' Associations relationship that shall accelerate irrigation development and provide efficient levels of irrigation services.

With NIA's vision, BRISRIP has been implemented thru two integrated components: the physical rehabilitation and institutional strengthening. These components have been employed to improve the operation capability of the Bago River Irrigation System (BRIS and promote irrigation-efficient farming systems which are envisioned to meet higher productivity, increased income and income opportunities and high standard of living within the coverage areas. Major activities under these two components include rehabilitation of irrigation facilities and roads, procurement of equipment, institutional development, farm management and watershed management.

the project consortium

TAIYO Consultants Co., Ltd.
is one of Japan's leading engineering, agricultural and rural development consulting company that specializes in providing services in the fields of irrigation and drainage engineering, integrated agricultural/rural development, roads and bridges construction, water supply, surveys, planning, design and project management.

KOEI Research Institute International Corp.
is an organization that is a center of economists, social development planners, rural and regional development planners and institutional development experts. It caters mainly on macro and micro economic studies, social and human resource development, education and health, gender and development, institutional development and natural resources and environmental management.

HYDROTERRE Consultants, Inc.,
is a Filipino owned firm that specializes mainly in irrigation, drainage, agricultural land development, watershed management, flood protection, water supply, hydropower, river basin development, multi-purpose water resources infrastructure and integrated rural development projects.

PHILKOEI International Inc.
is a private Filipino Consultancy company that specializes in development planning, feasibility studies, detailed designs and other pre-construction services, construction supervision, post project evaluation and maintenance and operation.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS
is a Philippine development consulting company, which provides management and technical services for the design and implementation of development projects in the South East Asia Region. The firm specializes in project management, agriculture and rural development, irrigation management, institutional strengthening, capacity building, training management and poverty alleviation.

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AT THE NEW FRONTIER

NIA helps fight poverty in Mindanao

"Our important focus on human freedom is in Mindanao—freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom from injustice." President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's promised "freedoms" resonated in this land of promise during the recent commemoration in General Santos City of the 105th anniversary of the proclamation of Philippine Independence.

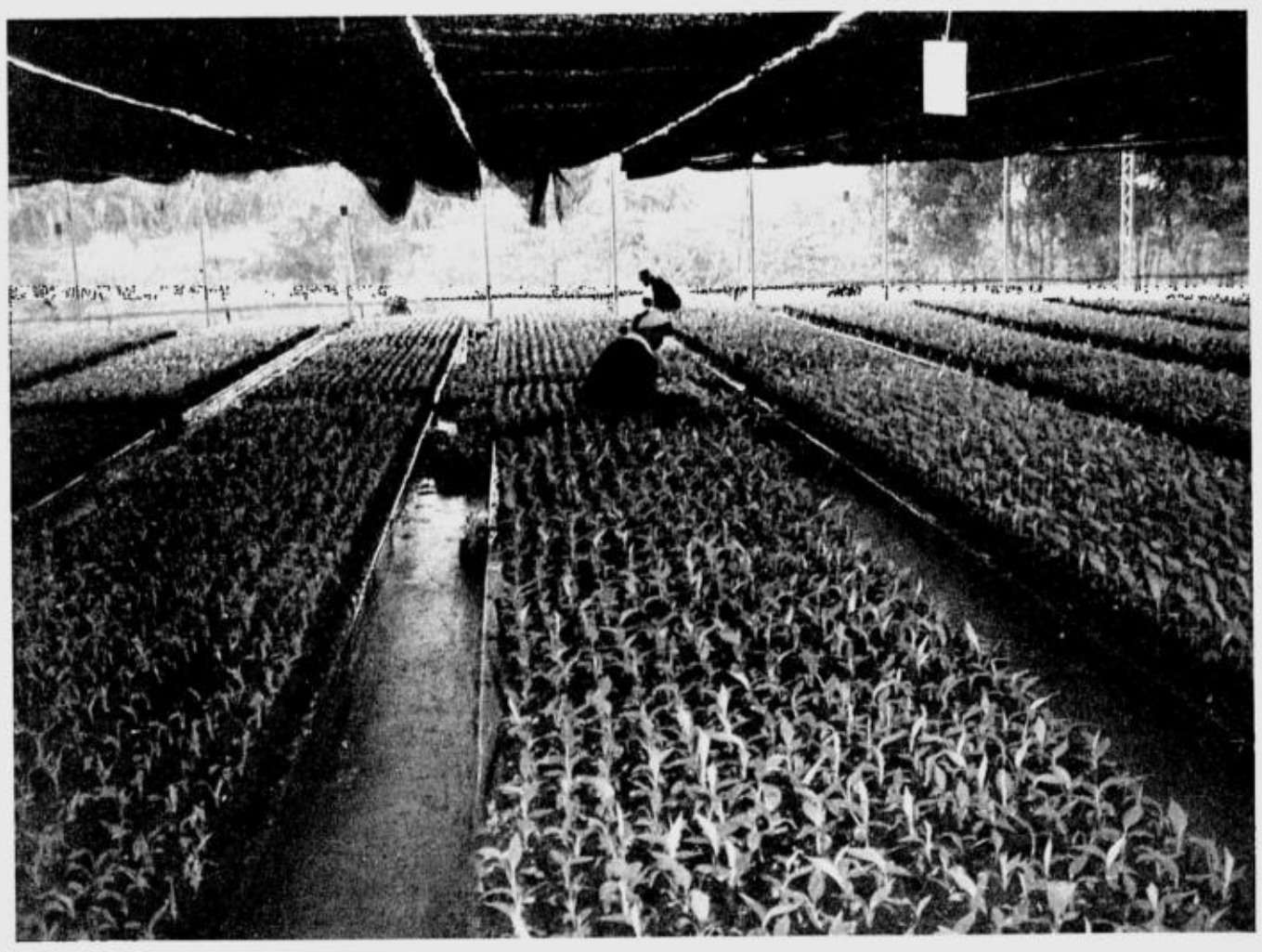
The President declared Mindanao as the new frontier in the fight for freedom as she reaffirmed her administration's resolve to liberate the region from the shackles of terrorism and poverty.

Mindanao, long considered the country's food basket with its bountiful resources and vast potentials, ironically remains in the backwaters of the country's economic development. It remains the food and raw material supplier of Metro Manila and other urban centers, but it has itself lagged behind in development. With the special attention President Arroyo is giving Mindanao, however, it will not be long before it experiences real growth.

Responding to the President's call, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), as one of the catalysts of accelerated growth in agriculture, will sharpen the competitive advantage of Mindanao's agriculture through such infrastructures as irrigation systems.

For this year, the NIA has allocated P1.64 billion for various irrigation projects in Mindanao, P661-million of which goes to the irrigation component of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). A total of 12,040 hectares will be opened for irrigation and another 16,940 hectares will be rehabilitated this year.

Among the region's priority and major irrigation projects are the P3.1 billion Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation Project, which will irrigate a total of 10,400 hectares in North Cotabato and Maguindanao next year; the P2.3 billion Lower Agusan Development Project which will service an additional 7,922 hectares of new farmlands in Agusan del Norte , and the P500 million Bubunawan Irrigation Project that will irrigate 2000 hectares in Bukidnon.



Mindanao's potential irrigable area stands at 959,000 hectares or 30 percent of the country's potential (3.126 million hectares). To date, however, only 29 percent of these lands is irrigated, compared to 51 percent in Luzon and 45 percent in the Visayas.

Region IX has the highest level of irrigation development while ARMM has the lowest. Forty six percent of Region IX's farmlands are already being serviced by irrigation facilities with only 10 percent for ARMM. For Regions X, XI, XII and CARAGA, the level of irrigation development ranges from 23 percent to 37 percent.

Of the 267,000 irrigated farmlands in Mindanao, 31 percent and 21 percent are in Regions XI and XII, respectively. Forty two percent are in Regions IX, X and XIII (CARAGA); each region has between 35,200 and 39,700 hectares of irrigated lands. Among the Mindanao provinces, Bukidnon has 30,400 hectares of irrigated farmlands while Davao del Norte and South Cotabato have 27,700 and 27,400 hectares, respectively. Zamboanga del Sur has almost 27,000 hectares while Sultan Kudarat and North Cotabato, 24,000 and 21,300 hectares, respectively. These provinces are the primary rice producing areas of Mindanao. North Cotabato and Zamboanga del Sur's palay production accounts for almost 18 and 15 percent of Mindanao's palay production. Sultan Kudarat's palay production is placed at 13 percent while South Cotabato and Bukidnon, 12 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

Fifty eight (58) percent of irrigated land is being serviced by national irrigation systems with 34 percent by communal irrigation systems. The rest are serviced by private systems. The concentration of these private irrigation systems is in Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, South Cotabato and Zamboanga del Sur.

The major national irrigation systems of NIA in Mindanao are Allah RIS (12,000 hectares) and Libuganon RIS (9,000 hectares) in Region XI, Pulangui RIS (11,415 hectares) in Region X, Lambayong RIS (11,355 hectares) and Libungan RIS (9,495 hectares) in Region XII, Salug RIS (7,224 hectares) in Region IX, Kabulnan RIS (5,022 hectares in ARMM and Andanan RIS (5,000 hectares) in CARAGA. These major irrigation systems already account for 43 percent of the total area (163,569 hectares) being serviced by national irrigation systems in the region.

Altogether, these national and communal irrigation systems in Mindanao directly benefit 157,720 farm families, 37 percent of which are in Region XI.

"We are determined to make the people of Mindanao feel that they belong to one nation," President Arroyo said, adding she will not stop until peace, security, and prosperity take root in Mindanao. "Freedom cannot wait. The people cannot wait," she stressed.

The President also called on all Mindanaons to face the challenge and rise up to the occasion. Unite and help the government give Mindanao a big push towards socio-economic growth, she exhorted them

"In order for the government to build a truly strong Republic, it is imperative that peace, stability and development be brought first to Mindanao," the President stressed.

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We work with nature.

Congratulations to the National Irrigation Administration on its 40th year of providing excellent service to our farmers nationwide.

NPC and NIA have been partners in promoting economic growth and progress, especially in the countryside---our joint contribution towards building a Strong Republic.

National Power Corporation

Greetings From:

CORPORATE OFFICE REGULATORY OFFICE

Republika ng Pilipinas
PANGASIWAAN NG TUBIG AT ALKANTARILYA SA KALAKHANG MAYNILA
Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City 1105, Philippines

Happy 40th Anniversary to National Irrigation Administration

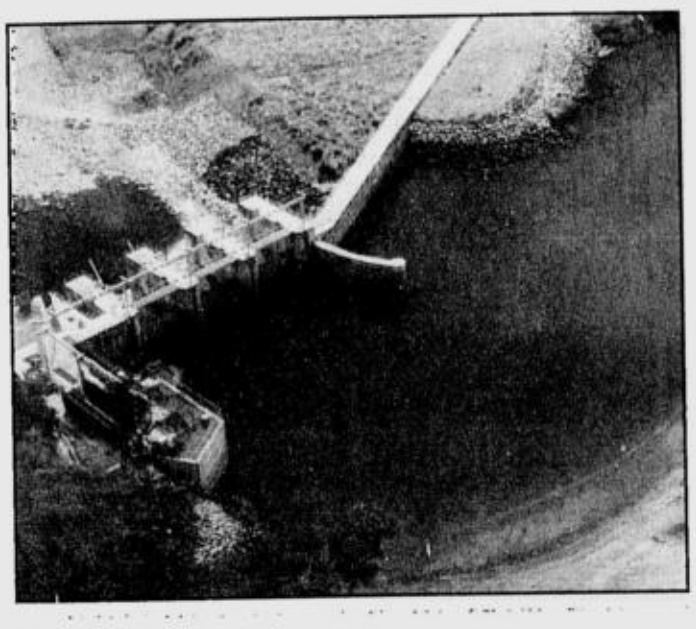
From: SANYU CONSULTANTS INC.
CONSULTANTS & ENGINEERS

CALENERGY INTERNATIONAL

CalEnergy awards Outstanding IAs

SUPPORTS AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FARMER EMPOWERMENT

Casecnan Weir



Taan Weir

Underground Power House

CalEnergy International's concept of service has always gone beyond "wires and pipes." Now on the second year of operating the Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and Power Project, CalEnergy broadens its initiatives as a responsible corporate citizen with the institution of the Casecnan Awards for Outstanding Irrigator Associations (IAs).

The Casecnan Award, which will be given for the first time this year coinciding with the celebration of the 40th year anniversary of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), aims to recognize and motivate the exemplary management of IAs of their irrigation systems. The award comes with a project grant amounting to as much as P100, 000 for the winning IA. Under NIA's guidance, IAs manage irrigation systems, maintain service canals, and organize farmer assemblies.

"We have a highly successful community development program for the Bugkalots residing in the Casecnan Project Primary Impact Zone (PIZ) and the local governments units hosting the project," says David Baldwin, CalEnergy President. "What we aspire for right now is to make ourselves relevant in the whole agriculture sector, not only in Casecnan but throughout the country."

CalEnergy Vice President for Government Affairs Robert Eugenio, who manages the community development initiatives of CalEnergy, said the objectives of the Casecnan Awards are to pay tribute to the hardwork and efficiency of the IAs and motivate them to pursue projects that will enhance farming innovation or irrigation management.

"IAs deserve all the support that they can get," says Eugenio. "We at CalEnergy would like to see ourselves actively helping to empower farmers, our core constituencies; one, through the irrigation benefits of the Casecnan Project, and two, through various pro- grams on agricultural innovation."

The recipients of the Casecnan Award are the Outstanding IAs from the National Irrigation Systems (NIS) and the Communal Irrigation Systems (CIS) categories selected by NIA for its annual NIA's Search for National Outstanding IAs. The criteria revolve around excellence in operation and

management, financial management, organizational discipline and other yardsticks such as innovative income generating projects for farmers.

Receiving the Casecnan Awards are this year's 2002 NIA Outstanding Irrigator Associations namely, Bagong Silang IA of Alicia, Isabela District 4, MRIIS (NIS category) and Buluan-Pigcawayan IA of Pigcawayan, North Cotabato, Buluan CIS Region XII (CIS category). These two were selected by NIA for their exemplary management of their irrigation systems and excellent provision of services to farmers.

Since 1996, when it started building the Casecnan Project, CalEnergy has been implementing a comprehensive community development program for the Bugkalot communities of Casecnan. Foremost of these is the Citrus Seedling Program, currently implemented in partnership with the Department of Agriculture.

The citrus program is considered as the single most important initiative of CE Casecnan for the socio-economic development of the locality's indigenous peoples, the Bugkalots. As of last evaluation, the citrus orchards can start its first commercial harvest next year with the expected yield of some 1.7 million kilos of assorted citrus. This harvest can result in an increase in the income of Bugkalot families from the present P25, 000 to P150, 000 annually. Complementing the citrus seeding program are other livelihood projects such as rattan raw materials processing and furniture making, cooperative building, and small business development.

CalEnergy has also poured significant contribution to infrastructure and facilities improvement in the five barangays of the PIZ with the provision of school buildings and community health centers, in addition to an equally beneficial barangay electrification program.

"All these projects are consistent with our objective to make a difference in the communities where we live and do business," says Eugenio. He disclosed that CalEnergy always equates good business with good service – the kind that extends to the realm of community development and volunteerism.

As part of its employee volunteerism initiatives, CalEnergy is also implementing MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company's Global Days of Service; a project that encourages collective acts of altruism among employees of CalEnergy for community development. Employee volunteers thus participate in various activities such as medical and dental missions, book donations and tree planting.

Global energy leader backs Casecnan Project

CE Casecnan Water and Energy Co. Inc., the company behind the Casecnan Project, is a project company of CalEnergy International, a subsidiary of energy generation giant MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company (MEHC), a global leader in the production of energy from diversified fuel sources including geothermal, natural gas, hydroelectric, nuclear and coal.

In 2000, MidAmerican further strengthened its solid position in the energy industry with its acquisition by Berkshire Hathaway, a holding company owned by America's most famed capital investor, , Warren Buffet.

In addition to CalEnergy, MidAmerican has five other major business platforms: Northern Electric and Yorkshire Electricity in the UK; Kern River Gas Transmission Company and Northern Natural Gas; MidAmerican Energy Company; and real estate firm Home Services of America.

Originally based in California, CalEnergy was founded in 1971 to provide consulting and development services for geothermal power production facilities in North America. During the late 1970s, the company recognized the many opportunities presented by emerging industry deregulation in the United States, and began the transition from a service provider to an independent power producer. The company relocated to Omaha in 1991 and began to develop geothermal energy projects in the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland, Australia and the Philippines. The company's experience and expertise in geothermal, gas and hydroelectric fuel sources, as well as other technologies, has positioned CalEnergy as a leader in these fields.

In the Philippines, CalEnergy's geothermal generation projects in the Tongonan Geothermal Reservation Area in Leyte supply a total of 540 megawatts of electricity to Luzon and Cebu. These are: the Mahanagdong facility; the Upper Mahiao facility; and the Malitbog facility, a three-unit 231-megawatt plant considered as the world's largest geothermal powerplant under one powerhouse.

CalEnergy has 10-year Build-Operate-Transfer agreements with the Philippine National Oil Company-Energy Development Company (PNOC-EDC) for the operation of these facilities. The facilities will be turned-over at no cost to the government in 2006-2007.

In 2001, it completed the construction of the Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and Power Project.

With the three geothermal plants and the Casecnan project, CalEnergy remains as one of the top investors in the Philippine energy generation business. In all, its investments in country since 1991 has reached US$1.4billion – a significant amount that continues to increase as the company broadens its involvement in various social and community development projects. With the leadership and financial backing of MidAmerican in its pursuit for quality service, CalEnergy is indeed a force to be reckoned with in the Philippine power and energy industry.

CalEnergy president reaffirms stronger partnership with NIA

(Following is a message from CalEnergy President David A. Baldwin on the occasion of the National Irrigation Administration's Ruby Anniversary)

In behalf of CE Casecnan Water and Energy Co. Inc. and CalEnergy International, I would like to congratulate the National Irrigation Administration on the occasion of its 40th Year or Ruby Anniversary. This milestone of NIA, our partner in the Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and Power Project, is a testament to many, noteworthy years of rendering much-needed irrigation services to Filipino farmers.

As the Philippines is predominantly an agricultural country, NIA plays an important role in constructing, maintaining and managing irrigation facilities nationwide. Without irrigation water, the country's fertile lands – even in the hands of the most industrious farmer – would not bear the fruits that sustain life.

Thus, we would like to strengthen our commitment to NIA in support of its noble mission. From the very beginning, we have always envisioned the Casecnan Project as a valuable facility that will help NIA achieve its vision in the agriculturally strategic region of Central Luzon. Now on its second year of commercial operations, the Project is starting to realize its promise to maximize the utilization of the Pantabangan Reservoir, helping NIA stabilize water supply in 102,000 hectares of ricefields in the Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation System, as well as provide irrigation to an additional 35,000 hectares of farmland in Central Luzon. The wider coverage is expected to yield an additional 465,000 metric tons of palay per year – a significant volume that would help push the country towards self-sufficiency in rice production.

We are proud to be part of the Casecnan Project, which now stands as a symbol of agricultural modernization that Filipino farmers can and should look up to. We at CalEnergy remain committed to our partnership with NIA as it continues to embark on another 40 years and more of fulfilling its mandate.

The Casecnan Project: Providing energy and life to millions

Water and energy bring more *life* to life -- this is the philosophy that drives the Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and Power Project, a US$700-million facility that CalEnergy International built on a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) agreement with the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

Situated along the borders of Nueva Ecija and Nueva Vizcaya provinces, the Casecnan project diverts water from the Casecnan and Taan rivers in Nueva Vizcaya through a 26 kilometer tunnel to the underutilized Pantabangan Dam. For years, NIA has had difficulty supplying the water requirements of its services areas in the Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation System (UPRIIS) due to insufficient water from Pantabangan. They were also unable to open up new irrigation canal network to the soil-rich but unirrigated Nueva Ecija towns of Guimba, Talugtog, Nampicuan, and Cuyapo. The waters from Casecnan would fill this need and service the requirements of thousands of farmers in the agriculturally important region. In addition, the power generation component of the Casecnan project would add 150 megawatts of new hydroelectric capacity to the Luzon grid.

A landmark infrastructure, the Casecnan project was completed in 2001 after two years of consultations and rigorous approval processes and six years of construction. It is the first multipurpose irrigation and power project of its kind in the country and the first BOT project involving the NIA and the Department of Agriculture (DA).

What truly makes the project a milestone is its numerous benefits to the Filipino people, particularly the farmers in the Central Luzon plains. The expected additional harvest of the 137,000 hectares in NIA's existing and new service areas is approximately 465,00 tons of palay per year. With the Casecnan project in place and as soon as NIA completes all new service canals, NIA, through its wider coverage, can realize its vision of enhancing agricultural productivity in the region, and the Philippine government's national objective of self-sufficiency in rice production should be within reach.

Another outstanding feature of the Casecnan project is its economical and earth-friendly utilization of nature's resources. The way it harnesses the waters from the two rivers exemplifies this.

The water diversion structures – smaller dams called weirs – collect the water and channels it through to a 26 kilometer, 6.3 meters wide transbasin tunnel into the Pantabangan reservoir. The use of diversion weirs and tunnel instead of a high dam averted the inundation of communities in the area.

While large infrastructures often result to environmental destruction, the Casecnan project boasts of an innovative design that preserved the beauty of the forested Sierra Madre and Caraballo mountains, under which the tunnels are located. In fact, to make the project as unobtrusive as possible, CalEnergy also built the power generation plant underground so as not to disturb the surface of the surrounding habitat. The world's most renowned engineering and tunneling experts ensured that the project is built according to international standards. It is also safe from seismic risks, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs.)

Upon project completion, CalEnergy endeavored to restore the project sites into their original state. Most of the construction related structures were demolished and the areas used as disposal sites for the tunnel rocks were covered with topsoil and made ready for revegetation. Thus, an aerial tour of the Casecnan project site would reveal a modern, striking infrastructure project sitting amidst lush greenery and peaceful, intact settlements of the Bugkalots, the indigenous peoples inhabiting the forest reserves of the Casecnan mountains.

All these bring new hope for a better life for millions of Filipinos. Casecnan's power contribution, which reached 360 million kWh in 2002 as against the committed 228 million kWh, is now lighting more than 200,000 homes while its irrigation component assures us of ample rice supply for years to come.

ADVT.